

# Horizon

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

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WAR AND PEACE IN WESTERN EUROPE

*by* PIERRE MAILLAUD

HENRY JAMES

*by* RAYMOND MORTIMER

'IVANHOE'

*by* LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

MALLARMÉ AS I KNEW HIM

*by* HENRY D. DAVRAY

I AM LAZARUS

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# HORIZON

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# COMMENT

THIS month we celebrate the centenary of Henry James, a man who, if he had never written a novel, would be considered the first of short-story writers, and if he had never written a short story, the noblest of letter writers, and if he had never written anything would by his talk alone be known as a great man. Today he is more than that, for he has become the symbol of a certain way of life, a way that is threatened not only by the totalitarian enemy but by the philistine friend, and yet a way which in an unpropitious age has helped masterpieces to be created and artists to live; the path of what James called 'the lonely old artist man', who is so easily destroyed and so quite irreplaceable.

Thirteen years ago Edmund Wilson, in his *Axel's Castle*, attacked this outlook. He criticized all the great individualists—Joyce, Proust, Valéry, Yeats, and Mallarmé—on the ground that they had carried the investigation of the ego to a point at which it had become unbearable, and he asserted that the great literature of the future could only arise from a corporate and socialist view of art as the expression not of the individual but of the mass. This literature has not yet arisen, and ten years later, in *The Wound and the Bow* Edmund Wilson seems to have returned to the conception of the artist as an isolated wounded figure, as different from the social realist as is a huge lightning-stricken oak from a Government conifer plantation.

It is difficult to prove that any age has been propitious for the artist; Socrates was condemned to death, so were Seneca and Petronius, Dante was exiled, the age of Louis XIV was one of both civil and religious persecution; the nineteenth century, with the lawsuits against Flaubert, Baudelaire, Hugo, etc., shows, was not much better; and in the twentieth century there are whole tracts of Europe where to be a writer is to invite a firing-squad. 'Silence, exile and cunning' are the artist's lot, and, exquisite though his happiness will be when his public, educated at last, mob him like a film-star, we may be wiser to assume that, for our lifetime, 'silence, exile and cunning' it will remain. For this reason it is necessary to keep the memory of these giants like Henry James and Flaubert, or Baudelaire and

Mallarmé always before us, even if we never read them, for they are the saints of modern bourgeois art, whose virtues—sensibility, intellectual courage, renunciation and consecrated devotion—emanate from just the storing of their books in our rooms. They are sacred relics which we need not too often disturb.

The tragedy of our civilization is that a specialized education has segregated an advanced artistic minority from the main body as with a tourniquet. A communist may be willing, in the interests of the masses (and therefore by his logic, of art), to wash out altogether this 'advanced' literature and to make a fresh start from a level open to all, which might lead, in fifty or a hundred years with an educated proletariat, to a new and happy art made by artists as integrated in the State as were the builders of mediæval cathedrals in the Church. But anyone who does not accept the overriding authority of the proletariat must feel that, since art has advanced so far, even if down the wrong turning, it is too late to go back. The artist of today in relation to his public is like the spelæologist of the Peak or of the Causses of Southern France; he walks at first with his companions, till one day he falls through a hole in the brambles, and from that moment he is following the dark rapids of an underground river which may sometimes flow so near to the surface that the laughing picnic parties are heard, only to re-immense itself in the solitude of the limestone and carry him along, not without evidence of previous exploration, until it gushes out through the hidden cave which he knows must exist, and sets him back in the sun.

---

DIANA WITHERBY

## SUMMER AFTERNOON

He stands in attic room  
 With sultry smell of wood,  
 Behind a leaden hood  
 A water-cistern drips;  
 And woollen cobwebs sway  
 In corners, dry and gray,  
 Like dying catkin-seed.  
 And out beyond the window a sun-glare shines,  
 That grinds on graves and gardens and railway lines.



The swinging trains are heard  
Across suburban green,  
And through the planes which screen  
The lilac from the slum,  
By globular sad child,  
To cages reconciled,  
Who sits in area shadow on iron rust stair,  
With fingers round the bars of his black stone lair.

In redder richer streets  
There is no sound at all,  
Except behind a wall,  
Through shadow of the limes,  
A slow piano plays.  
All breathing seems to die,  
As notes slide out and lie  
Like beads in drowsy house.  
Eternal afternoon of these haze-filled minds!  
No music ever lifts or unseals the blinds.

For us there is no escape of the waterfall,  
Floating, hovering, and hurling  
Like white falcons on to the backs of the rocks  
And into the long,  
Long, copper rivers.  
Through blue splinters and spearlike shadow of pines,  
Spraying in an icy midnight sun,  
Tearing with a tidal wave of wind,  
And pouring at last through the flocs  
Into rocking thawing sea.

For us there are only the moments in which we know  
That prisons are not fired away  
By wild or arrow eyes,  
That from the jungle of our day,  
The heart alone can bound  
The tangled stripes of root and shade  
And burst into the sun.  
But when we let these moments fade,  
The man shall stand in attic room,  
The child will crouch in slum,  
The mind remain like sleepy pear,  
Not for a moment, not for an afternoon,  
But for an endless drought of years.

DIANA WITHERBY  
SUMMER NIGHT

A lazy hand could float  
As though from side of boat  
Along this oily dark green sky  
Of summer in a city dusk.  
The only sound is far  
Away on banks of tar,  
I hear, like gulls, the children cry,  
Till sapphire evening hides the stone.

And now that it is night,  
I lose my daytime sight,  
And I should drift with sleep's long sigh  
As swan and star on smoky lake  
Are covered in the mist.  
Instead my limbs resist,  
I wait, with crooked head, wide eye,  
For night-time madness to begin.

For though I cannot see  
The darkness is a key  
Unlocking giant vision, Why,  
With reason gone, am I a prey  
To fears that have been known  
Not only in my own  
But all existence—fears that die  
With every individual life:

My mind walks as a ghost  
With all who ever lost  
Their chances; all the old pass by,  
And I am there, too slow, too late,  
To learn or understand;  
There is no lover's hand  
That does not for a moment lie  
In mine, then tires and flings away.

These ticking fears contain  
The stillness and the pain  
Of all the summer nights that I  
Will know, and all the summer nights  
Of centuries long gone.  
A thousand nights or one  
Contain the dying dragonfly  
And chill the heat of coloured day.

PIERRE MAILLAUD

## WAR AND PEACE IN WESTERN EUROPE

SELDOM have the questions raised by the prosecution of a war been debated more freely and generally than in the present conflict. Yet never before has the discussion been attended by such confusion. If ever there was a clear case for taking up arms, September 1939 supplied it. Today, however, the basic factors of the war seem to be less in evidence than they were at the time, in spite of the fact that three and a half years have gone to show the appalling proportions of the threat which has been met and, in so far as we can see, successfully checked. It is perhaps natural that it should be so. The instinct of self-defence which acts at the outbreak of a war is clear enough. Less clear is the notion of finality in a war, especially when the course of events has so often changed that it has repeatedly compelled us to revise our practical conceptions of the world situation at the end of the conflict. What that situation will be, we cannot guess even now. According to the duration of the struggle we may see a resurgent Europe or a Continent so exhausted physically and mentally that the problem of political reconstruction may be dwarfed by that of biological salvation. The condition of Russia, perhaps of England, and, to a lesser degree of America at the outcome of the conflict will also depend upon the time factor. Nor can we assess at this stage the importance which Asiatic nations and communities will assume in post-war policies.

We cannot therefore know today what we shall be able to do tomorrow and any detailed plan for future action can only be a draft on the Unknown or, at best, the expression of an intention. The wider the plan, the more precarious its accomplishment must be. Ignorance of the future should not, however, deter us from trying to influence it; but our influence and our attempts can only be successful if we have a clear notion of the present and a sufficient knowledge of the past. In either respect, I doubt that it is so. How, for instance, can the majority of the people



truly understand the character of the war when they are left in partial ignorance of the exact nature of the enemy whom they are fighting? How can they decide whether they are at war with Germany or with Nazism when they do not know to what extent Nazism is part of a typically German—and recurrent—evolution or, as some people would have it, is no more than a temporary excrescence on the German body politic? How can they decide whether they are prosecuting an 'Ideological' or a 'National' war when no definition has been given of these ambiguous conceptions? And yet whilst the war may be successfully fought on the battlefield independently of the answers to these questions, the whole discussion of a post-war settlement must revolve round this pivot: the true meaning of the Second World War. Any misreading of its character may be fatal and would probably lead to a Third World War. For it is according to our interpretation of the present struggle that the future system of security will be framed.

It is often said that the war in which we are engaged is 'Revolution', or that this is a 'Revolutionary' war in the political sense. Nobody seems to have made the slightest attempt to elucidate that statement, which can only be either a self-evident truth or an absurdity: it is a self-obvious truth if it means that the war will bring about great changes, for every single war in the past has had that effect. If, on the other hand, it suggests, according to the proper definition, that this war has been waged for the purpose of defending or of creating a Revolutionary state of things, what on earth does it mean? It was in Germany that we witnessed the most recent example of Revolution amongst the belligerents of today. Germany's Revolution was a moral and physical mobilization of her man-power and Economy for war purposes. Her spreading of National-Socialism was an instrument of war wherewith to weaken her enemies and not to enlighten her friends. Her 'New Order' was only born in 1941 for exactly the same purposes when she found it necessary to enlist European support in the face of new threats, and even so, it merely amounted to a rational exploitation of the Continent for her own national purposes. Italy's Revolution was achieved in 1922 and her only war aim was to grab a few territories in the wake of the German war-machine, a process which is far too old to be called Revolutionary. In the Allied Camp, which of the powers at war was

defending a Revolutionary order? Which of them had a Revolutionary programme, apart from much-needed social and economic reforms which a Revolution in the true sense of the word might imperil as it would add a tremendous weight to the crushing burden which the conflict will leave on their shoulders? Is the re-establishment of international decency, racial and political toleration such a Revolution? Is the growing determination of the masses to achieve social security an entirely new feature of public life produced by this War, although it may have been encouraged by an increasing sense of sacrifice? The war, by interrupting a process of social evolution and demanding from every citizen of a State a strenuous effort in the defence of a common cause has undoubtedly made previous popular demands more imperative. It has strengthened the case for greater equality, a case which has been persistently presented for many a generation with varying fortunes. All this, so far, does not amount to a 'Revolution', nor does it make the present conflict a Revolutionary one.

Whilst this notion of 'Revolution', like many other slogans used *ad nauseam* hardly bears scrutiny, there is another assertion equally familiar to our ears which deserves more attention: I am referring to the common theory that the present war is 'Ideological' rather than 'national'. This is a decidedly ambiguous and therefore very misleading formula. And, again, it may confuse the public mind when we come to the discussion of post-war arrangements.

An Ideological war is a war waged by a nation, group of nations or human collectivity for the purpose of forcing upon others adherence to its own creed, or alternatively accepted for the sole purpose of defending that creed against those who attack it. A national war is a war waged for the purpose of national aggrandisement or domination over other nations, or, alternatively, for the protection of a nation's territories and independence.

In so far as most nations have beliefs and habits of their own, which they cultivate on their own territories, all national wars are also ideological since their effect must be the enforcement upon others, or the protection of, ways of living and persuasions which are part of a people's possessions. The only conflicts which could be truly described as purely national are those in which the object of an aggressor is merely the seizure of a point of

vantage not involving the annexation of a number of citizens. The only conflicts which could be held as purely ideological would be those in which no territorial changes or political domination is aimed at and in which the sole object of the war is a change of persuasion in one of the belligerents. There have been, in fact, very few instances in history of so-called ideological conflicts which did not screen national designs or of national conflicts which did not involve the exercise of ideological influences. Even the Crusaders were tempted by temporal acquisitions. Charles V of Austria, in his wars against the French, used the Religious weapon as well as the Spanish Phalanx in the same way as Hitler recently wielded the ideological one together with his armoured divisions. Prussia, in the eighteenth century, owed its rise to the birth of the Prussian State through the 'Ideological' League of Augsburg. England's defence of 'freedom' during the Napoleonic Wars led to very precious territorial acquisitions, while France at the time still carried about for the purpose of conquest revolutionary creeds which Napoleon had deserted in practice.

So long as men shall hold beliefs and territories, national and ideological factors will play their parts in international conflicts and be closely interwoven. It is, therefore, idle and often misleading to describe a war as 'ideological' or 'national' because it suggests a single war aim where several are in fact pursued. What is true today is that whole communities taking an active part in the conduct of a conflict and sharing, through the Press and the Radio, in the free discussion of all its aspects, each people is emotionally more receptive and sensitive than it was in the past; that it is easier to debate general and often vague ideas than to appreciate practical and complex realities; that taking a more direct interest in the conflict through the acceptance of greater sacrifices, individual citizens expect these sacrifices to bear fruit both in a material improvement of their condition and in the prevention of further conflicts; and that such demands are debated openly or, conversely, exploited by the enemy in the same way as religious problems were discussed and exploited in days when popular contributions to the prosecution of wars were sought on behalf of religious faith.

To take firstly the case of Germany; was her war 'ideological' when she attacked Poland in 1939? Indeed not. The aim



Germany was not the conversion of Poland and other nations to her own creed. It was the acquisition of new territories and the subjugation of European peoples in the national interest of Germany. National-Socialism was used as a war-machine and as a means of consolidating German domination once the machine had performed its war function. To suggest that the German war is ideological on the ground that Ideology has been used for the last few years amounts to saying that the aim of the German army was to generalize the adoption of tanks throughout Europe on the ground that Hitler successfully used tanks to overcome his enemies in the field. National-Socialism was a German weapon, a philosophy of mobilization, more effective than the Monarchy or the Empire, so effective, indeed, that after appalling losses the German nation still stands upright in its stiff ideological corset and prefers to be bled to death rather than to be 'corrupted by foreign poisons'—so truly German that when the same doctrine wavers or shows its vulnerability in Latin States, it remains a source of strength to the German community.

On the other hand, the Powers which took up the German challenge with different fortunes had their own and diverse views on community life and relations between nations. These beliefs were part of their national heritage, inseparable, indeed, from centuries of life on their own territories. The defence of British institutions is part of the national defence of England. To that extent, territorial protection involves ideological protection. Ideas do not spring from nowhere. They are a product of history, which is itself the effect of experience, testing, adaptation and revision of hypotheses. Their fate is partially, though not totally, linked to that of the physical civilization which harbours and engenders them. They can be destroyed or at least sterilized for long periods of time through the destruction of the country in which they flourish, of the national institutions which enshrine them. Who will deny that Civilization suffered a tremendous setback when the Germanic hordes broke through the Christianized Roman Empire? Who would dare to assume that our conceptions of social intercourse and our faith in the value of liberty would have survived through some miraculous process if Germany had prevailed at the time of the Battle of Britain? The fate of 'Ideas' is, therefore, often identified with that of a nation or of a group of nations. Never has History offered such

a striking proof of it as in August 1940. To speak contemptuously of the 'national' character of a war and to set against it the would-be superior notion of an 'ideological war' is, therefore, as absurd as to believe that there is no connection between mine and matter.

The elucidation of such terms is far from being purely academic. It is, in fact, a vital need. Clausewitz stated that war is a continuation of policy by different methods. Nearly a century later, Sir Julian Corbett showed in terms of British strategy how 'the method to be used must depend upon the object of that policy'. To ascertain the object of that policy, and at the same time the object of the Declaration of War on Germany by Great Britain and France in September 1939, has become even more essential in March 1943 than it was then.

The real difference between this war and most (if not all) previous conflicts does not lie in its more or less 'ideological' character. It lies foremostly in the very nature of the German menace in the twentieth century. In the twentieth century the German threat was not aimed at *some* territories; it was not aimed at *some* peoples. It was not only a menace of a far greater magnitude than any previous one. It was a menace different from others in *kind* as well as in degree. The German war was a war of extermination which would, if successful, not merely have 'rooted out the work of masonry' in this our civilization but smitten every single European value and ensured their lasting destruction by means of total subjugation. The optimists may argue that the strongest shackles are sometimes broken, but not so without effects on the patient if his servitude has endured. Man, to use an equally valid metaphor, may rebuild after a flood, but it is a long process, and who knows what materials will then be available to the builder? The ruthless process of 'dehumanization' would have gone on for years, broken generations into subservience and oblivion of what was once European culture. Civilization is the product of long-suffering patience and it is a frailer edifice than we imagine. Once hurled to the ground, it can only be rebuilt at the same cost as before and with the same sacrifices. There is no magic wand.

In 1939 the Western Powers did not fully realize the extent of the German peril. They met an enemy who was waging a war of extermination with physical and moral weapons suited

to their own traditions and to their own conception of warfare, which, despite all allowances made for German fierceness, fell very short of the actual proposition. We were, in fact, fighting on unequal terms, not only because we lacked planes and tanks, but because the full extent and ruthlessness of the German war aims could not even be conceived by civilized minds. And Germany's war effort had been truly adapted to those aims.

Despite the fall of France, after the enslavement of Poland and of many other Continental nations, I believe that the outside world did not really take stock of the German menace until the Russian campaign. Only the terrific struggle carried by Russia—the only nation who had gauged the stature of modern Germany and attempted to arm accordingly—could reveal the colossal proportions of the German physical and moral war-machine. After France had failed in the attempt, Winston Churchill and his 'few' had inflicted the first setback to German expansion. The Channel was not bridged. But it was later in the Russian Steppes that the world understood what Germany had meant.

In the same way as a true understanding of the terms 'total war' in its method and finality had dictated the course to be followed by Great Britain and America in the production of weapons and the mobilization of man-power, the realization of Germany's absolute War-Aims should serve to clarify our programme of self-defence in the future. Confronted with such a threat, national self-protection by those nations which still hold valuable tenets of civilized life truly amounts to more than a mere safeguarding of their lives and properties. It constitutes in itself, however 'national' the initial motive, a crusade for civilization. That civilization is very far from perfection. Yet with all its shortcomings it enjoys a tremendous advantage over the 'New Order' from which Europe has not yet broken loose: it is constantly perfectible because it retains the precious seeds of human freedom, because it neither cripples evolution nor sterilizes human thought, because it does not militarize consciences and kills neither hope nor recrimination, because, if it does not sufficiently enhance spiritual values, it does not make their destruction a condition of its survival. Let us not delude ourselves into the belief that war results in human progress and later blame successive leaders for the frustration of our hopes.



War interrupts progress and puts the clock back. But not by the thousand years which Hitler had promised to the German people and of which three—only three—have already sufficed to throw Continental Europe back into chaos.

The first, unescapable war aim is, of course, to rescue Europe from that chaos. After years of wholesale murder, scientific looting more effective than that which followed the Great Invasions, the transfer of millions of slave labourers from one land to another, with children weighing between four and five pounds at their birth in occupied countries, with the declining birth-rate, the complete collapse or perversion of education in most nations, the breakdown of national industries, the disruption of communications, the probable loss of moral and civic sense in millions of men, such a task must in any case be tremendous. So tremendous, indeed, that when one hears people comfortably talking of universal systems of international policy to be enforced at once upon the conclusion of an armistice, one wonders whether any common sense is left in this world. This is like suggesting the drafting of complicated articles of association to consumptives whom only artificial respiration can save and who need a long convalescence before they will be able to walk from their home to their office. Do we not realize that the greater part of Europe is on the verge of physical collapse and that even the upheavals which we shall probably witness in the course of the next months are rather similar to the foolhardiness of a patient whom fever has rendered delirious? Do we not realize that this is the work of Germany, not only of the Gestapo but of every single German official, army officer, non-commissioned officer, private or settler who has set foot on conquered territory?

We want 'to save Europe' and European Civilization. The first task must be a doctor's job, and a long and patient one at that. In this the Allied Powers will be helped by those States whose conditions of existence through occupation, natural resources and strong traditions will concur to hasten their own recovery, whose age-old institutions will be, by their very 'deep-rootedness', most promptly restored. For these reasons I believe that the recovery of France and her restoration to a state of comparative health will be swift. Every Continental nation will have to be fed, clad, re-equipped in every way. Then

with the gradual influx of blood Europe will begin to feel its feet again.

Yet the salvation once accomplished in the physical sense, it will have to be undertaken in the political field. There again it seems to me that instead of proceeding by way of attractive hypotheses it would be better to start from facts. What are the facts of the War? The primary and most obvious one is that Western Civilization has nearly perished, that Western Civilization was the German 'target for the century'.

Taking cognizance of that very clear fact is the first prerequisite to any sound thinking. Some people may challenge the term 'Western Civilization' on the ground that non-Western States shared in it. By Western Civilization, irrespective of whether it is now represented by other nations, I mean a Civilization which spread from the Mediterranean to the western seaboard of Europe and which has been most consistently, though not exclusively, represented in Europe by those nations which follow the European coastline from Italy to Norway. It is Christian and liberal, independently of any practised religion, in that it accepts within varying regimes the following tenets:

That the individual is not merely the subject of a State or community but an object in himself; that the rule of the majority, whether by law or consensus of opinion, must be tempered by the defence of the rights and convictions of the minority; that every man is entitled to hold and profess his own moral, political and religious beliefs provided that he does not attempt to impose them upon others forcefully, that neither on racial nor other grounds is persecution or discrimination permissible; and that, internationally, the weak have equal rights with the strong (if not equal means).

It is well to remember these principles of which not a single one has been respected by National-Socialist Germany and of which several have been repeatedly infringed by Germany in the past irrespective of her then existing regime. (Even in the days of the Weimar Republic, a Jewish student was excluded from the greatest seat of learning, the Heidelberg University, and contempt for the weaker European nations was freely expressed in the schools.) It is well to remember them, for it must regretfully be confessed that after three and a half years of struggle against Germany the 'free peoples' of the West

have not remained altogether immune from the poisonous creed spread by their enemy. It is well to remember also that their penetration through such countries as Italy and Spain<sup>1</sup> was truly accidental while it has been through history a recurrent phenomenon in Germany.

To those articles of faith, first born on the shores of the Mediterranean, spread throughout Western Europe by Christianity, then by the revival of Greek culture, and later embodied in lasting institutions by such lands as the Low Countries, England and France, other and younger States have recently adhered. The Czechoslovakian community was a model in that respect and became for that very reason Germany's foremost object of hatred and contempt. Freedom, toleration, the sense of the individual values, had not therefore remained in pre-war Europe a Western monopoly.

Yet today Europe has been truly shaken to her foundations. If we wish to rebuild, and to rebuild on these principles, we must at first find the bedrock, we must begin with those nations whose practice of, and association with, such essential notions have stood the test of time and survived previous trials. England, France, Belgium and Holland undoubtedly fulfil those conditions. And I have no doubt that when Winston Churchill made his offer of an Act of Union between the British and French Empires he was thinking of the preservation of Western values as well as of strategic and political expediency.

Prejudices against the future value of France as an ally, illusions about Germany's rapid 're-education' ('Education' would be the proper word) and a misreading of the Russian problem will no doubt cause any new suggestion of an association between the Western Powers previous to the construction of a wider system to raise emotional objections. As to France, evidence of her resistance, not only in the recent past but ever since the capitulation, and the proofs which she is certain to give in the future of her decisive contribution to the common cause may to a large extent correct such prejudices. As to Germany, I may only express the hope that when the full tale of German (and

<sup>1</sup> Even in Fascist Italy only German pressure in 1939, after seventeen years of an authoritarian regime, succeeded in introducing a degree of racial discrimination. As to Spain, Totalitarianism was forcibly introduced there in the manner that we know.



not merely Nazi) devastation of Europe is unfolded, the most deeply embedded illusions will vanish, and that the full realization of what England has herself avoided will evince both the true nature of the German menace and the proper means of preventing its repetition.

With regard to Russia, what is not, perhaps, sufficiently understood in this country is that any strengthening of Franco-British ties (provided that such a process involved no threat to her security) will improve and not impair the working of the twenty years' alliance concluded with this country. Stalin stated four months ago that Russia did not aim at the destruction of the German State (a view from which I personally dissent if it means that German unity will once more be restored with all its inherent dangers). If Russia persists in that policy and the Western Powers in their endorsement of it, it may be safely assumed that Stalin is not naïve enough to believe that a change of regime in Germany will finally exorcise the German menace. While Russia may therefore take steps to strengthen her own security in Eastern Europe, she will find it not only natural but profitable to the general cause of security that similar steps should be taken by the Western Powers. Moreover, a strong Western organization, having less to fear from any departure from Russia's present policy of co-operation with the West than a set of isolated States, will be able to deal with more frankness and more straightforwardness with the Russian ally than each of these single States could afford to do. To put it bluntly, Russia might well place more trust in an association between Britain, France and the Low Countries, bound by liberal conceptions of policy as well as by common interests, than in a lonely Britain who might seek to strengthen the precarious security which she would enjoy on the edge of Europe by resorting to the support of some other Powers with a doubtful record. It was, indeed, when Britain found herself, as a result of circumstances, in a potentially perilous situation that Joseph Chamberlain, and to some extent Neville Chamberlain, thought of an understanding with Germany.

A Western group which, while preserving its own institutions, would endorse the treaty of alliance which binds Britain and Russia, would ensure the mutual respect of both contracting parties for their respective institutions. The very traditions of

Britain, France and the Low Countries would guarantee at the same time the peaceful intentions of the association and the safeguarding of the principles which it represents.

It is not suggested that such a Western Union by the mere fact of its existence and by virtue of its contract with Russia (a combination which America would no doubt support) would constitute in itself a panacea for all European diseases. A powerful corner-stone would, however, have been laid. Those values which, such as we know and practise them, sprang from Western Europe and which would not survive if Western Europe were submerged, could thus be refitted, crystallized and re-enforced. From our lands, they could spread again by virtue of their example. For we must not take it for granted that, after its tremendous trials, Europe will have retained its best traditions in full.

Economically, such a group of States would foster colonial development, since they hold in trust most of the colonial territories of the world. Strengthened by a common bond, the Western States could well afford, not only to pool and guard the resources of their Empires, but to offer to those nations which deserve it facilities of access to its riches. They could also encourage its advance towards political and social liberalism, since each of the associated States has produced in the past methods of exploitation and progressive institutions which could usefully be combined.

It would be idle to ignore the fact that, whereas the general tendency encouraged by the war is towards greater security, and whereas it is commonly coupled with vague and generous aspirations towards a greater international solidarity, one of the actual effects of the present conflict is likely to be the growth of a strong national feeling among the peoples of most European States. This feeling will be stimulated in England by a sense of saturation after years of cosmopolitanism on British territory and by the memory of a lonely struggle after the defeat of the French Army. It will be stimulated in most European countries by German occupation and by the deep national humiliation suffered everywhere.

We have grown accustomed to the notion that social progress was naturally bound with some degree of internationalism. That notion, born of a deterministic and materialistic philosophy of the

world, with its Marxist exponents,<sup>1</sup> is not altogether borne out by contemporary events. Alternatively, we have accepted the view that nationalism and socialism combined produced totalitarianism for the sole reason that the two words have been hyphenated by Germany, who did not practise socialism but State control of her mobilization for war purposes, and whose nationalism was fundamentally expansionist. Thus once more a purely German phenomenon, wrongly interpreted as a general product of ideology, has blurred our vision and prevented us from even wondering whether Marxism was still practicable. The most easily propagated theory in modern times has turned out to be totalitarianism, which started as a purely national one, while Marxism has only succeeded, despite its international character, in the closed world of Russian national economy. English nationalism in June 1940 saved not only the British Empire but the Western world and all its values, because those values were enshrined in a stout national body. Yet who would say that the national sense which in England reached its highest pitch in June 1940 was in any way aggressive?

Today, however restrictive the national idea may sound to our ears, accustomed as they are to a broader vocabulary, it is very far from being extinct in Europe. It will have been strengthened by the war, whatever dialectical tricks may be used from the public platform to conceal its existence. As George Orwell rightly observes in his book, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, the national feeling in England takes root in a mild but deep xenophobia which does not express itself in aggressive designs, but often in indifference to the outside world. The tenets of orthodox Marxism must therefore be revised if we wish to have a correct picture of a Europe in which that instinct will grow (at least for a time) together with a demand for social equality, security and progress.

There is another reason why it is best to start with a system of international relations which is not too all-embracing and which does not unduly strain what sense of and desire for international solidarity may survive the war in Western Europe and generally in European countries. We know that national isolation is not practicable. Yet we must take the national feeling into account in our plans. An association between a limited number

<sup>1</sup> Cf. F. A. Voigt: *Unto Caesar*.



of Powers whose political principles are fundamentally similar, whose immediate interests are obviously common both in the field of Economy and of Security: this is a proposition which is sound and practical enough to be understood and accepted without delay by the peoples of those States and which can be worked out without over-burdening the still precarious sense of international responsibility which we all have so painfully developed. A world-wide system imposing upon a Devonshire farmer the obligation of wielding plough and sword for the sake of settling a dispute between Bolivia and Paraguay may be stirring to the imagination, but it is not practicable in the kind of world with which statesmanship has to cope.

Let us therefore proceed by stages. If we wish to preserve not only our skins and families but our ways of living and sow the seeds of further progress, we must first defend civilization where it still lives and in those countries whence it can best be spread. We must cement its foundations, which have been sorely shaken. A Western union between Britain, France and the Low Countries, involving full collaboration in the military, economic and political fields, practising a common policy, and bound together by such articles of faith as I have recalled above would be an example to others as well as a platform wherefrom we might crusade further afield. It would be in the most favourable position, because of its peaceful character and potential wealth, to help in its turn the weaker European nations, such as the Greek people, who, in 1940, as twenty-four centuries earlier, sacrificed itself for the defence of the civilization which we partly owe to its genius.

It is not proposed here to discuss the many problems with which post-war Europe will be confronted, nor the part which each nation will have to play. It is merely submitted that the portents of many political difficulties are already but too clearly apparent, and that, far from shirking their responsibilities in European affairs (of which one of the foremost would be the full restoration of the Czechoslovakian State), the Western Powers would derive from their very association the means of coping effectively with them. Finally, it may be said that, without such an association and such articles of faith, neither English nor French nor Western civilization could be certain of standing the test of those further trials which the future holds

in store. The parting of the ways between the Western States, whatever contracts might be passed by each of them with other nations, would mean isolation outside Europe for Great Britain and, for France, some kind of future subjection to one of the more powerful ethnical groups in Europe.

After the war, the rival claims of social progress and political security will once more press heavily upon the Exchequer and generally the State Economy irrespective of the solution which may be found to the European situation. The burden spread over several shoulders, shared by States of great wealth, would be lighter to bear. From the chaos of Europe this island has hitherto emerged unscathed, though with many wounds. Britain cannot find either social or political security in isolation. At the same time she cannot pretend to solve the European problem—alone of the Western Powers—together with Russia at the other end of Europe, Russia from which she is separated by over two thousand miles of misery, underfeeding, disruption. While prior duty goes to the immediate salvation of Europe, Britain would in any case have to proceed step by step in the political field. The first of these steps is to re-create and restore, together with France, a Western platform wherefrom civilization may once more spread through Europe at the same time as material improvement and progress.

Europe has returned for a time to the dark ages. The barbarian has left chaos in his wake. However advanced we deem ourselves to be, despite centuries of thought and science, we must retrace the steps and resume the progress which the pioneers of our civilization had painfully made towards order and decency. We must do it with the same hopes and with the same humility.

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#### ABOUT THIS NUMBER

By kind permission of the War Artists Commission we are able to reproduce some photographs of drawings made in Irak in 1942 by Captain Edward Bawden. The originals were unfortunately lost at sea.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

## HENRY JAMES

15 April 1843—28 February 1916

DISTASTEFUL the pomps with which centenaries are solemnized—the bland expatiations, the assembled dignitaries, the ambassadorial visiting-cards nestling in wreaths of laurustinus—the thickly laid on and all too golden varnish—yet the hundredth anniversary of an artist's birth offers a commodious occasion and the earliest, for 'placing' him. Whether death found him at the crest of his reputation or in the trough of the wave, the winds of fashion will, in the twenty or thirty or forty intervening years, have sighed themselves into a calm. Posterity then begins the summing-up. An artist is already fortunate if his centenary does not pass unnoticed, but the meagre appreciation enjoyed by Henry James has gained volume since his death: during our current afflictions he has found a greater body of readers than ever before, who discover in him a mirror of the civilized enjoyments now in abeyance, a guardian of the values that war repudiates. Moreover, to his devotees he looms yearly larger, as distance dwarfs so many reputations that were once more commanding. To talk of him is in any case a pleasure that does not depend upon any counting of attentive ears.

First a glance at his contemporaries. He came fifteen years after Tolstoy and Meredith; the novelists nearest to him in time are Mark Twain born in 1835, Miss Braddon in 1837, Ouida in 1839, Zola, Daudet, Hardy and Miss Broughton in 1840, Anatole France in 1844, Maupassant and Stevenson in 1850, George Moore in 1852. Henry James learnt early in Paris from Tourguénieff and the masters of French naturalism a high sense of the artist's calling and a corresponding reverence for technique. He frequented painters also, though not the great masters of Impressionism, and they talked of values and notes and composition and foreshortening and *repoussoirs*, all terms that he was to find useful in defining the practices of the novelist. The first fact to notice, I think, is the contrast between him and his eminent contemporaries, who in their novels were mostly pre-occupied with 'naturalism' or sociological analysis or the play of



ideas. Henry James, concentrating increasingly upon composition at the expense of representation, might be said, but for the urbanity of his tastes and the narrowness of his influence, to take a place beside the masters of realism corresponding to that of Cézanne beside the Impressionists. As he was without fellows, so now he is without successors. Mrs. Wharton and Conrad imitated his earlier manner, but there has been nobody, unless it be Miss Compton-Burnett, who has sought to emulate the severity of his final writings. It would be easy to argue that his happiest achievement was in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) and such stories as *The Siege of London* (1883), *The Reverberator* and *The Aspern Papers* (1888), *The Death of the Lion* and *The Coxon Fund* (1894) and *The Spoils of Poynton* (1896). Certainly these are the works one would recommend to the novice. I have myself a special kindness for *The Awkward Age* (1899). This is the most coruscating of his performances, and it passed utterly unnoticed—was not the Boer War period the vulgarest in our history? But I prefer to offer, as a piety apt for this anniversary occasion, a few notes upon the three great final novels. For it is with these in his hand that Henry James would most have wished his effigy to abide the verdict of the future.

*The Ambassadors* was written first, though not published till 1903 (and then, wonderfully, as a serial); next came *The Wings of the Dove* in 1902 and last *The Golden Bowl* in 1905.

It is the idiosyncrasies of the style that first arrest the reader's attention, arrest often all too literally, for only the more obstinately bookish ever push their way along the devious, liana-entangled tracks of so swampy and fog-laden a jungle. But the author's notion of the novel needs to be considered before the style in which it is expressed; and happily in the series of prefaces he wrote for the 'New York' edition of his novels and tales Henry James expressed this notion with a characteristic freedom from parsimony. I must wildly assume that the reader knows these prefaces as well as the three novels—else I should have space only to resume respectively their doctrine and their plots. 'One's work should have composition, because composition alone is positive beauty'—that is the prime assumption, in which the Master seems to treat the novel even more rigorously than Mr. Roger Fry and Mr. Clive Bell, at their most puritanical, ever created the picture. Henry James accordingly dismisses *War and*

*Peace* as a 'large, loose, baggy monster'. Such books have life but what, he asks, with their queer elements of the accidental and the arbitrary, can they artistically mean? 'There is life and life, and as waste is only life sacrificed and thereby prevented from "counting", I delight in a deep-breathing economy and organic form.' One must note in passing that Henry James displayed his economy only in discarding what he thought irrelevant—no writer, not even Proust, abounded more lavishly on the themes that he selected. A still more capital assumption, though one he dwells on with less tenderness, is that the novelist or at least he himself, is above all a poet. In the preface to *Daisy Miller* he portrays himself in a gondola at the Grand Canal entrance of a Venetian hotel, watching with a friend the capering of two awful young American girls. The friend accused him of falsification: 'They are the real Daisy Millers.' To which came the answer, 'My supposedly typical figure was of course pure poetry and had never been anything else; since this is what helps the imagination, in however small a dose, ever directly makes for life.' More conspicuously than *Daisy Miller* the three final novels must, I suggest, be judged as poetry. If they are extravagant, difficult, sometimes even exasperating, so are many of the finest poems.

Attention of perusal, I thus confess by the way, is what I at every point, well as here, absolutely invoke and take for granted; a truth I avail myself of on this occasion to note once for all—in the interest of that variety of ideal re-igning, I gather, in the connection. The enjoyment of a work of art, the acceptance of an irresistible illusion, constituting, to my sense, our highest experience of 'luxury', the luxury is not greatest, by my consequent measure, when the work asks for as little attention as possible.

The meiosis in the last sentence does nothing to moderate what must now seem the exorbitance of the claim. Since the death of Henry James it has been increasingly recognized—so signal has been human progress—that the less a novel or a painting or a song requires attention, the more evident its value. The great majority appear congenitally incapable of enjoying the exercise, no less stringent than luxurious, of the imagination and of the sensibility; and therefore to provide for such exercise is an offering against the common man. But poor benighted Henry James could not anticipate this discovery, and his work unblushingly demands the most that we can give.

His insistence upon being judged as a poet does not relieve him from the obligation of verisimilitude, since poetry, though

in a different degree to factual writing, must impose belief on the reader or at least suspension of disbelief.

And this he admits:

There is our general sense of the way things happen—it abides with us indefinitely, as readers of fiction, from the moment we demand that our fiction shall be intelligible; and there is our particular sense of the way they don't happen, which is liable to wake up unless reflection and criticism, in us, have been skilfully and successfully drugged.

And re-reading his early novel, *The American*, he decides in the light of a ripe cynicism, that this is the way things don't happen: the Bellegarde family would in fact have positively jumped at the rich and easy American. This candour will justify us in raising some similar objections to the novels we are considering, but there is a further Jamesian assumption that must first be allowed for.

This in fact I have always found rather terribly to the point—that the figures in any picture, the agents in any drama, are interesting only in proportion as they feel their respective situations; since the consciousness, on their part, of the complication exhibited forms for us their link of connection with it . . . . Their being finely aware—as Hamlet and Lear, say, are finely aware—*makes* absolutely the intensity of their adventure, gives the maximum of sense to what befalls them. We care, our curiosity and our sympathy care, comparatively little for what happens to the stupid, the coarse and the blind; care for it, and for the effects of it, at the most as helping to precipitate what happens to the most deeply wondering, the really sentient.

This is a defence or explanation of his departure in the choice of theme both from the example of his adored Balzac and from the fashion of his contemporaries, Zola, Daudet, and Maupassant, no less than Hardy. Beginning with Rowland Mallet in the eternal *Roderick Hudson* he always presented his story as reflected in the sensibility of a 'finely aware' observer. This observer may be detached—or profoundly, tragically, implicated in the events observed; he may, like Strether in *The Ambassadors*—'the most polished of possible mirrors', his creator calls him—change his values under the stress of these events; he may be a scamp or even a child; but always he is 'hideously intelligent', and his awareness is not only fine but of a creative sort such as one could hardly hope to find except in a writer. Moreover in the later books an ever increasing proportion of the characters are possessed by this same eagerness for the possibilities in a situation, his inquisitive fury, till in *The Golden Bowl*, not content with our protagonists whose habits of mind betray the professional



deformation of novelists, he adds a superfluous if dazzling chorus, Fanny Assingham, who exposes the significance of every finest shade to her patient and admiring husband—and he in turn represents not the still excluded man in the street but the rare, equally patient and admiring, if occasionally exhausted, reader.

Spacious and splendid, like a stage again awaiting a drama, it was a scene she might people, by the press of her spring, either with serenities and dignities and decencies, or with terror and shames and ruins, things as ugly as the formless fragments of her golden bowl she was trying so hard to pick up.

No less actively than the Princess, the other characters in these novels regard life as a sequence of scenes to be peopled. A fierce wonderment renders them vicariously introspective, assigning motives, fathoming deceptions, interpreting silences. 'She kept reading not less into what he omitted than into what he performed a beauty of intention that touched her fairly the more by being obscure.' This is typical, and it is in such wholesale attribution of his own tastes and problems to his personages that Henry James most extravagantly departs from representation. The oddity of this seems sometimes to have glimmered into his consciousness. 'His danger', he writes of the student of great cities, 'His danger is inevitably of imputing to too many other right and left, the critical vision—so very long may it take him to learn that the mass of mankind are banded, probably by the sanest of instincts, to defend themselves to the death against any such vibration of their simplicity.' I would maintain that the method was justified by its fruits—except in *The Sacred Fount*, which strikes me as a self-parody and which is the only book of his I have been unable to read to the end. We come to accept the convention that all the characters have creative imagination, just as we accept Shakespeare's characters speaking in blank verse. And if this glitter of imputed intelligence seems to anyone too far-fetched, the Master has his answer pat—'Far-fetched? But so are diamonds and pearls'.

Henry James called *The Ambassadors* 'the best "all round" of my productions'. He continues: 'It was immeasurable, the opportunity to "do" a man of imagination . . . The actual man's note, from the first of our seeing it struck, is the note of discrimination.' Though he never, he said, had been 'less stupid than in the treatment, there are one or two weak patches. When Strether caught the guilty pair on the river, he 'thought it was

queer as fiction, as farce, that their country should happen to be exactly his'. Is it not unaccountably clumsy to call a coincidence in a novel 'as queer as fiction'? More unaccountable still, Henry James repeats the *gaffe* in *The Golden Bowl*. 'The coincidence is extraordinary,' the Prince says to Maggie about her purchase of the bowl, 'the sort of thing that happens mainly in novels and plays.' Without these wanton explanatory pauses on the thin ice, the reader might well admit the coincidences as he admits the other continual, though more delicate, demands on his credulity. Again one cannot but wonder why we are given none of the letters Strether receives from Mrs. Newsome: they are in his consciousness, only too distressingly, and therefore could in all propriety be afforded for our amusement. More important, they might help us to believe, as we now can't, that she could really seem what he calls 'deep devoted delicate sensible noble'. The strain on our assent, however, is much lighter in this novel than in its successors. The story pursues a beautiful curve, so that the reader feels he is being led gently down a palatial stairway in some *hôtel* designed by Mansard or Gabriel. Though the action is confined to three months, Strether's conversion appears not only conceivable but inevitable, so deliciously does Henry James evoke all that Paris stands for. If he liked it the best of his books, it was partly, I believe, because it most fully reflected his own sense of values. For what was he but a Strether, whose chance had not come too late? And this brings me to a point that I wish to labour.

Henry James, like most novelists and—what is more relevant—like all tragic poets, was concerned principally with the drama of the conflict between the wicked and the good. Moreover, because of his own situation as an expatriate American, he found in the impact of Europe upon Americans his preferred, most familiar, and best handled material. But the odd thing is that almost always he associated the America he had deserted with innocence and virtue, the Europe he had adopted with self-interest and every other wickedness. The psychologist may diagnose this as a propitiation excited by unconscious feelings of guilt. But the reader, at least the European reader, finds the results often difficult to swallow. Perhaps the unjust vision of America provided by the movies is partly to blame, but we can't feel that we are so immeasurably, so automatically, less moral

than the Americans. We may further persuade ourselves that the values to which Henry James attached the first importance have never been conspicuously more in esteem on the other side of the Atlantic. Yet in *The American*, *The Europeans*, *Madame de Mauves*, no less than in *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl*, he plugs the same refrain. Virtue is a prerogative of the Americans, while wickedness is the mark of Europeans and of the expatriates they have corrupted. *The Ambassadors* is, I think, the only important story that gives Europe the *beau rôle*—and even here our poor continent is carefully associated with lying and adultery.

It is noticeable at the same time that in *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl*, no less than in *Paradise Lost*, villainy shows as more engaging than virtue. One begins to wonder whether Henry James chose to live with Europeans in spite of their sinfulness or because of it. Did he, perhaps, even agree with Fanny Assingham—‘Stupidity pushed to a certain point is, you know, immorality. Just so what is morality but high intelligence? (Hardly a typical view, we natives may think, to attribute to an Englishwoman!) Certainly Kate and Charlotte are more attractive than the Millies and Maggies. Milly, in particular, ‘poor pale exquisite Milly’, is too dim and lifeless to excite more than a cold and dutiful compassion. When her creator sobs over her, he may indeed strike the reader as a falconer making a display of inept sensibility over the quarry of the hawk he has trained and flown. Next, remembering *What Maisie Knew* and *The Awkward Age* and *A London Life* and *The Turn of the Screw*, one concludes that the smirching of innocence is a subject with a peculiar fascination for the Master. Isn’t there something equivocal, a touch of the *voyeur*, in this obsession? Innocence can shed a lustre on other qualities, but if isolated it looks either insipid or purposefully provocative.

Henry James thought that *The Wings of the Dove* was unsatisfactory because it was ill proportioned, which it is—the second half of it being too short, ‘false and deformed’. (Under his loving elaboration many of his themes took a fuller treatment than he had expected, and what began as a *conte* would swell into a novel.) But there is an even more fundamental weakness in *The Wings of the Dove*. The idea, we are told, is of

A young person conscious of a great capacity for life, but early stricken and doomed, condemned to die under short respite, while also enamoured of the



world; aware moreover of the condemnation and passionately desiring to 'put in' before extinction as many of the finer vibrations as possible, and so achieve, however briefly and brokenly, the sense of having lived.

But this idea is only adumbrated in the background of the novel, the prime interest of which is focused on the moral processes of Kate and Densher: 'confronted and united in their essential wealth of life', they monopolize our sympathy and the author's attention. The preface has nothing to say about this, though it can hardly have escaped Henry James's notice. The book begins brilliantly, indeed it never ceases to be rare and rewarding, yet when he comes to the Venetian scenes his purchase weakens and even the end seems to me clumsily handled. He did justice, in fact, neither to his original theme nor to the theme that had taken its place. But the latter reappears, this time triumphantly, in *The Golden Bowl*.

I do not know if anyone has tried to define the kinship between these two final novels. Suppose that Densher saves Milly by marrying her, and gives her a father whom she marries to Kate—then the *Golden Bowl* situation follows. It is as if a painter had repeated a group with only slight variations in the poses and using the same models, but achieving a heightened liveliness in the figures. Kate, placed a little further back, is now Charlotte; Milly is brought right to the foreground, given a higher colour, a firmer chin, and becomes Maggie; Densher has gained in beauty and in boldness—a hint here of a Renaissance Master—and now is the Prince. The most important change is the addition of a fourth figure: this enriches the composition magnificently, though not in itself a success. 'Before the American business-man', we read in the preface to *The Reverberator*, 'as I have been prompt to declare, I am absolutely and irredeemably helpless, with no fibre of my intelligence responding to his mystery.' Occasionally there is a scribble in the sketch-book: 'What he had been placed in the world for was, to his own conception, simply to gouge a fortune, the bigger the better, out of its hard material.' That is Christopher Newman; of Mr. Verver we are told 'he had believed he liked transcendent calculation and imaginative gambling all for themselves, the creation of "interests" that were the extinction of other interests, the livid vulgarity of getting in, or getting out, first'. But the consequence of Henry James's helplessness is that this self-made millionaire, this rival of Rockefeller

and Gould, shows most of the time only as an exquisitely sensitive connoisseur. What feelings, if any, he has for his resplendent wife we never learn. Is it an accident that his name is the Latin word for a wether? Apart from being a father, he seems sexless—and Henry James took prodigious trouble with his names—witness the preparatory notes for *The Ivory Tower*. One remembers also Chad's awful sister in *The Ambassadors*:

'Is that the daughter's name, "Pocock"?'

'That's the daughter's name,' Strether sturdily replied.

And Kate's equally awful sister in *The Wings of the Dove* is called Condrip, a name from which one prefers to avert the imagination.

If Mr. Verver does not carry his weight as a reflection on Big Business in its most brutal period, Maggie also may strike us as not highly representative of her type. In life the American heiresses married to European grandees have been various enough, some of them pretentious, some merely frivolous, some *enfants terribles*, some distinguished by high culture and intellect and a formidable force of character, some even pathetic, but guilelessness and self-suppression have hardly been the prevailing notes. The two doves excite, I suggest, our 'particular sense' of the way things don't happen. And that drags us back to Henry James's peculiar view of the American as a foredoomed victim. It started very early.

I recall that I was seated in an American 'horse-car' when I found myself, of a sudden, considering with enthusiasm, as the theme of a 'story', the situation in another country and an aristocratic society, of some robust but insidiously beguiled and betrayed, some cruelly wronged, compatriot: the point being in especial that he should suffer at the hands of persons pretending to represent the highest possible civilization and to be of an order in every way superior to his own. What would he 'do' in that predicament, how would he right himself or how, failing a remedy, would he conduct himself under his wrong?

Henceforward he regularly imputes to his grandees 'the arrogance and cruelty, the tortuous behaviour, in given conditions, of which great people have been historically so often capable'. It is wonderful how this wily artist, with all his experience of the world, should have persevered so consistently in the tradition of the novelette and melodrama that makes all baronets wicked. Even in *The Ambassadors* little Bilham has to talk of 'the trail of the serpent, the corruption, as he might conveniently have said, of Europe'. What fascinated the novelist was the contrast between the airs of superiority and the baseness

of the heart: 'Such accommodation of the theory of a noble indifference to the practice of a deep avidity is the real note of policy in forlorn aristocracies.' I am arguing not that Europeans are good, but that Americans may not invariably be lacking in lustfulness, predacity, arrogance, perfidy and the rest. Henry James drew his Americans, I think, from his childish recollections, and it will be remembered that neither in his generation nor his father's did his family have any truck with 'business'. (They had a lot of truck with Europe.) He managed to preserve his illusions by living over here and, I suppose, just not meeting any compatriots unless they had been at least a trifle tainted by our contact. All the same, America stood not only for the innocent but for the superlatively dismal—'the dreadful great country, State after State, which never seemed to me so big or so terrible'. These are Fanny's words, but one can take them as voicing her creator's deep feelings. When, after *The Golden Bowl*, Henry James did revisit his native land, for the first time in over twenty years, terrible it indeed appeared. One result was a story, *The Jolly Corner*, in which an expatriate, as it might be Henry James himself, encounters in his old New York home the phantom of what, if he had not fled, he would have become—a figure 'evil, odious, blatant, vulgar'. Still more significant his unfinished novel, *The Ivory Tower*, for this reverses the international situation of *The Wings of the Dove*, of *The Golden Bowl*, and even of *The Ambassadors*. The predatory and deceitful characters are Americans living in America. It is taken for granted that fabulous fortunes are almost bound to be hideously ill-gotten. The heiress, though 'good' enough in other respects to be a dove, is so suspicious of fortune-hunters that she does not marry; and innocence has become the prerogative of the utter expatriate. Henry James, having for the first time peered into the faces of two of his old models, had, alas too late, begun to paint the Ververs from life.

The importance Henry James attached to money was almost Balzacian, though he envisages it always not as an end but as a means, a protection against squalor and a guarantee of leisure. Always fussing, needlessly and neurotically, about his own income, he knew how dependent upon a modicum of money were the things he most valued, including a fine awareness, including perhaps the art of fiction itself. (It is to be noticed that the Novel rose with the capitalist system, and seems now with it

especially as the author with so gratuitous a largess treats us to the feelings of Fanny Assingham, who is outside the action. Yet the intensity of the book is such that no reproach can carry much weight; for intensity, Henry James declared, is the grace to which all others must, if need be, be sacrificed, the end to which composition is the means. *The Ambassadors* may win our preference by its neatness of plan, by the almost flawless execution, by its specially sympathetic hero, by the values championed, and by the Paris evoked—yet *The Golden Bowl* is the more vivid, the more dramatic, the richer, and, yes, the more memorable.

Whether one adores or rejects Henry James depends finally, I think, upon his style. This is so particular that it can most effectively be criticized by parody (let me instance the incomparable Sir Max), and so exciting that after watching its caracoles a writer has difficulty in resuming his own jogtrot. When Fanny Assingham 'parenthesised with characteristic amplitude', and again when Mr. Verver talked about *the straight tip* 'in his mood of amusement at English slang', these personages borrowed two of their inventor's most conspicuous habits. An affection for adjectives prevailed in his family, and Henry James developed a further habit of attaining the *mot juste* by a series of patient approximations. His most splendid resource, however, is in the prodigality of metaphors that situates his prose among the richest in our tongue. He likes to develop the consequences of a trope for their own gaudy sake, just as Homer and Milton elaborate a simile as pure ornament. If the plans of his later novels are augustly symmetrical, with their routine of alternating 'preparation' and 'scene' (a relic of his labours as a dramatist), the elevations swarm with a Gothic exuberance of variegated imagery. The intrinsic beauty of this continually rewards the reader. On the other hand our syntax proves sometimes inadequate to render with lucidity the complicated probings in which the Master rejoiced. 'Well,' said Strether, 'I'm quite content to let it, as one of the signs, pass for the worst that I know he believes he can do what he likes with me.'

One thinks of those hollow ivory balls, one within the other, serially, which display Chinese virtuosity carried to excess. Again:

This awkwardness of his conscience, both in respect to his general plasticity the fruit of his feeling plasticity, within limits, to be a mode of life like another—certainly better than some, and particularly in respect to such confusion as might reign about what he had really come for—this inward ache was not wholly dispelled by the style, charming as it was, of Kate's poetic versions



It would be cruelly easy to continue with such finds, for the longer sentences in the later books often tempt the most submissive admirer to chuck the book across the room. But if Henry James sometimes mumbles and fumbles and beats unbearably about the bush, usually we are made to share the gusto of his tireless exploration. It is simply a treat to be with someone so miraculously intelligent. In these last novels the comments on life and places that enliven his earlier works are reduced to a minimum. But how much he can achieve in one festal phrase!

The hugely distributed Paris of summer, alternately dazzling and dusky, with a weight lifted for him off its columns and cornices and with shade and air in the flutter of awnings wide as avenues . . .

The generous mood of the sunny gusty lusty English April, all panting and heaving with impatience or even at moments kicking and crying like some infant Hercules who wouldn't be dressed . . .

Venice glowed and plashed and called and chimed again; the air was like a clap of hands, and the scattered pinks, yellows, blues, sea-greens, were like a hanging-out of vivid stuffs, a laying-down of fine carpets . . .

Next two glimpses of English 'good society':

A large bright dull murmurous mild-eyed middle-aged dinner, involving for the most part bland, though very exalted, immensely announceable and hierarchically placeable couples . . .

The oddity of the London 'squash', a thing of vague slow senseless eddies, evolving as in fear of some menace of conversation suspended over it, the drop of which, with a consequent refreshing splash or spatter, yet never took place . . .

Two minor characters, Waymarsh and Miss Barrace:

Michelangesque! He is a success, Moses, on the ceiling, brought down to the floor; overwhelming, colossal, but somehow portable . . .

She seemed, with little cries and protests and quick recognitions, movements like the darts of some high-feathered free-pecking bird, to stand before life as before some full shop-window . . .

Lastly a protagonist:

. . . the appearance of some slight slim draped 'antique' of Vatican or Capitoline halls, late and refined, rare as a note and immortal as a link, set in motion by the miraculous infusion of a modern impulse, and yet, for all the sudden freedom of folds and footsteps forsaken after centuries by their pedestal, keeping still the quality, the perfect felicity, of the statue; the blurred absent eyes, the smoothed elegant nameless head, the impersonal flit of a creature lost in an alien age and passing in an image in worn relief round and round a precious vase . . .

It is a happiness just to copy out such cadences, but one might continue for hours without conveying the constant richness of the source.

It was like hanging over a garden in the dark: nothing was to be made of the confusion of growing things, but one felt they were folded flowers and that their vague sweetness made the whole air their medium.

Some such happiness, at once breathless and bemused, as he here describes is Henry James's most precious offering to the reader. But apart from the general scented and tenebrous richness, particular moments shine with an unforgettable vividness—Strether's vision, for instance, of Chad in his shirt-sleeves and Mme de Vionnet with her pink parasol as they float down the stream. This lingers in the memory like the loveliest of pictures by Manet or Monet, yet when one looks up the passage, there are only a few simple sentences. Similarly, Charlotte stalking Maggie on the dark terrace, Maggie watching the agonized Charlotte as she shows the visitors round Fawns—such scenes I count among the most intense in fiction.

Hands raised in horror would have been the Jamesian response to the belief, now returning into fashion, that the novel should be furnished with a 'message'. Even in his criticism when he is shocked—and sometimes he seems not unmiffish—the objection is ostensibly grounded not upon morality but upon taste. Yet in his fiction, as in almost all great writing, there is necessarily an ethic implicit. He was born only four years after Pater, whose doctrine he may be supposed to have found congenial. The characters in the final novels with whom he most closely associates himself is Strether, and never more, I think, than in the outburst to little Bilham—the hinge of the whole book—beneath the tall bird-haunted trees of the sculptor's garden in the Faubourg St Germain.

'Live all you can; it's a mistake not to. It doesn't so much matter what you do in particular, so long as you have your life. If you haven't had that, what have you had? . . . One lives, in fine, as one can . . . Still one has the illusion of freedom: therefore don't be, like me, without the memory of that illusion . . . Don't at any rate miss things out of stupidity . . . Live!'

But this requires qualifying by another of Strether's conclusions:

'What it comes to is that it's not, that it's never, a happiness, any happiness at all, to take. The only safe thing is to give. It's what plays you least false.'

This emerges from *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl* no less than from *The Ambassadors*. Kate and Charlotte, goodness knows, 'live all they can', but that does not save them. They succumb by betraying a trust, and for Henry James, as for Shakespeare, this is the epitome of vileness. The Jamesian world brims with heroic lies—in *The Golden Bowl* especially, the good are

LUCIAN FREUD  
Juliet Moore asleep  
1943







always seeking to protect one another from anguish by the most ingenious and exacting apparatus of pretence. The pursuit of truth, however, must be placed beside the apprehension of beauty and the tending of affection as one of the three activities closest to Henry James's heart. These ideals, and the consequent disregard for 'the stupid, the coarse and the blind', are the fruits of a civilization that threatens to disintegrate. The stupid, the coarse, and the blind now require not our sympathy but our admiring obedience. But since dark ages not only follow but precede ages of enlightenment in the protracted tidal-history of mankind, the tercentenary of Henry James may find his works duly exalted, together with those of Mallarmé, Fauré, and Renoir, congenial nurslings of the same bountiful and auspicious lustrum.

## LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

### 'IVANHOE'

GUS GOSLING wasn't a young man who talked with ease, and as he motored along the Clapham Road and through Balham with the Beilby-Browns of Leighton Buzzard, he couldn't have put very clearly into words his sense of the mysterious charm of London, with all its unexplored regions and unknown interiors. And if, by some gift of tongues or other miracle, Gus had been able to express; and if the Beilby-Browns had been subtle enough to comprehend the feelings by which his consciousness was coloured, he dumbly felt that the communication of such impressions wouldn't have been received with much enthusiasm by these old Bedfordshire friends. The outcome, they might have regarded them, of experiences and London initiations in which they hadn't participated, and concerning which Sophia Beilby-Brown at least entertained rather serious misgivings.

'How much wiser it would have been for poor Gus,' she had more than once remarked of late to her Percy, 'how much more sensible for him to have stuck to his gardens at Dumplings! About gardening Gus does know something; they say he's an expert really. And if our friends, the Trottons of Trotton Court, haven't called—Lady Trotton you know is one of my father's patients—

the society of Leighton Buzzard is quite good enough for him—he's quite a beau at old Buzzard. But in London he's lost, lost, I can tell you. I consider that Charles Street set he hangs on to a lot of trashy people: they're nobodies really. And they take up a nincompoops, Lady Lawcourt says—and Gus is a nincompoop—and then drop them like hot potatoes. And as for Gus's Lady Blanche, you ought to hear what Sybil Lawcourt has heard about her Ladyship!

Gus, whom this cultivated daughter of the Leighton Buzzard practitioner would sometimes describe as 'The Shenstone of Bedfordshire' (she had attended a university extension lecture on Eighteenth Century Poets), Gus had done well, she thought, to settle down on the little property—so like Shenstone's Leasowes—he had inherited from his great-uncle, the rich Bedford hatter (who had made a fortune by making into straw-hats the golden straw of the district), and to devote himself to the adornment of that miniature park. What better, indeed, could he have done when she had let him know that Percy, the ambitious son of the Leighton solicitor, was to be her choice, and had married this young lawyer and had gone with him, and the brilliant career he felt sure lay before him in the legal circles of London.

'But how unwise of poor Gus!' she exclaimed, when on visiting Leighton Buzzard a few years later, she learnt that her former admirer, after making a little show-place of Dumplings, to which even the Trottons would take their guests to see the gardens, the artificial waterfall, and the vistas he had opened with views of the river (again like Shenstone, with his grand Lyttelton neighbours)—that Gus had been carried off by one of the grandest of these guests—in fact by Lady Blanche Tassell, the famous leader of fashionable taste, and had been installed by her in lodgings not far from Charles Street, where she lived and entertained in splendour.

But Sophia was a good-natured creature; her head hadn't been turned by Percy's success (and her own) in legal circles; so that when they got back to their Bedford Square flat, she had sent a note to Gus, inviting him to come and see them. She was genuinely fond of her former suitor; and he would be glad, she felt sure, to meet again his old Buzzard friends. He would be impressed, moreover (for she knew Gus had taste), by the rich mahogany pieces, the etchings and Japanese fans with which she

had adorned their flat, and especially by the great shiny Royal Academy picture—their latest purchase—that gave light and glory to it all. But they hadn't changed really: nor, she felt sure, had Gus changed.

Yet, she soon began to wonder, was he really quite the same Gus? In the 'buzz of old Buzzard', as she wittily called the Bedfordshire gossip, he seemed to take no interest. Even of Dumplings and gardening he hardly spoke; and he never mentioned the Trottons; even about Percy and his legal career he made no inquiries; he hardly glanced at their etchings and Japanese fans, and ignored the great picture, *Love and May Blossom*, by Sir Augustus Staircase, R.A. What he talked of mostly was Lady Blanche Tassell, and the way she was now completely redecorating her house in Charles Street.

The clever Sophia soon twigged what had happened; the decorating of houses, Sybil Lawcourt had told her, was now the rage in Mayfair; well, if Gus had been dragged into that sort of thing by those sort of people, let him come down to the villa she and Percy had just taken and furnished at Binstead in Surrey. That would teach him what they knew—and there was nothing Bloomsbury didn't know—about tones and harmonies and period pieces. Would he come the next Saturday? Percy would drive them all down in their new Sunbeam.

Gus accepted the invitation gladly; but having guessed—for he wasn't quite as stupid as he seemed—the attitude of Sophia towards his London friends, he did not mention Charles Street again as they motored through what seemed to him the endless streets of the outer suburbs. And when there flashed on his eyes from the window of a furniture shop in Upper Tooting a gleam of green colour, he restrained his impulse to ask the motor to stop. He half believed that what he had seen was the radiance of green lacquer, the rare, the famous green lacquer of which Charles Street possessed one small specimen. He decided, therefore, to return to Tooting as soon as possible for further investigation. For Gus had a flair, as Lady Blanche sometimes told him; beauty would flash on him in gleams he must follow; doors into Paradise would seem to open; and if he held himself back, what awful remorse would then haunt him! haunt him sometimes for years. And now, if it really was green lacquer he had seen, if it turned out to be a really fine specimen of this rare commodity, what a thing it would be to talk of in Charles Street, where, whatever

he might have said in Bedford Square, he was accustomed to sit in silence when questions of taste were under discussion.

Our hero, troubled as he was by the dread of an enlarging person, forced himself, when in London, to take long promenades; and on the first opportunity after his return from his week-end visit, he accomplished a double purpose by traversing, this time on foot, the streets through which he had passed in the Beilby-Browns' Sunbeam. Along the Clapham Road and up and down Balham Hill he followed the gleam, and found its origin at last in Upper Tooting. Nor had his flair deserted him, for in the window of a furniture emporium there shone what he believed was a really fine old specimen of the green lacquer. But a great disappointment now awaited him; the cabinet, he was informed, was probably sold; two ladies had been in that morning and asked to have it sent to their home in Balham; only, however, on approval, so that if the gentleman would call again in a few days, there was still a chance that he might secure it. Gus did call again, after getting his eye in, so to speak, at Charles Street. On this second visit he found that the cabinet was for sale; the Balham ladies (benighted beings!) had decided not to keep it. The price would be a strain on his modest resources; he gave, however, his name and address and secured its refusal for a few days, meaning in the meanwhile to ask for the expert advice of Charles Street about so important a purchase.

Gus started back, his thoughts full of green glamour; this was his first adventure of this kind, and he was greatly excited by it. It turned out, however, to be a day of exciting adventures, for on his walk back to London his somewhat protuberant eyes were caught by another and even more surprising gleam. This illumination was a white glimpse through a door left open by chance in the wall surrounding a villa residence in Balham. The door had 'Ivanhoe' inscribed on it, and 'Ivanhoe' he saw was a plain house of no architectural pretensions—the kind of stucco villa which can be found in almost any London suburb. The door in the wall, however, revealed a view of the most surprising garden he had ever seen. And there, like a glory in its midst, was the mass of white blossom which had caught his eye in passing. What on earth could it be, he wondered. Could it be the *Tecta Orbis Niveus*, a magnificent, an incredible specimen of that rare Tibetan shrub which Reginald Farrer had discovered, and of which there were



supposed to be only three plants in Europe? The splendour of this exotic blossoming reawakened his horticultural passion, and drew him, moth-like, through the door and across the lawn. He quite forgot that he was trespassing, until, as he stood filling his sense with the sight and scent of the flowering marvel, he became aware of the presence of a young woman who was digging in a nearby border. 'I'm sorry!' he cried, 'it's dreadful of me—but the door was open—do tell me, is it *Tecta Orbis Niveus*?' It was, the young woman replied, as she leaned on her spade and gazed at him smiling. She was neither young nor strikingly handsome, but Gus fell for her, as the phrase is, at once; and at once the two of them plunged into horticultural talk. In the general inspection of the garden which followed, Gus felt that he had seen more marvels, and acquired more information than had fallen to his lot in the whole previous course of his experience. It was a miracle of Perfection—there was no other word for it—Perfection, set down in a London suburb, far beyond anything he had achieved in his little Arcadian realm at Dumplings. Rarest of all its wonders was a bush of that most incredible of Reginald Farrer's discoveries, the *Reginalda caerulea*, of which he must have sent a slip to Balham himself. It hadn't yet explicated in Europe its great petals of a blue, Farrer had written, beyond even that of the gentian which had ceruleated the gardens of Europe. They hoped, however, Gus was told, that in eighteen months or so they would see it in flower.

When at tea-time his new friend asked him into the house to meet her sister, who was, she told him, the one of them who really knew about gardening, he was met, as they entered the house, by another surprise. For 'Ivanhoe', commonplace as it looked from the outside, was within even more incredible proof of wealth and exquisite taste than the garden. There was not much in the way of furniture in the spare quiet rooms, but each piece, and each picture on the walls, he felt, was a masterpiece, perfect, and beyond price or question. Correggio's *Agony in the Garden* was as pretty as the garden-fête of Watteau, which hung by it; Crivelli's exquisite *Circumcision*, Fra Angelico's *The Entombment* and his *Rape of Europa*, the Vermeer of Delft, the Chardin *Still Life*, set the standard of this small collection; while a Berthe Morisot and a small Whistler represented the nineteenth century. As he stood before this blue picture, he was introduced to the

older lady, a plain, charming spinster of about thirty-five, he thought. And when, after a pleasant half-hour of conversation he took his leave, it was with enthusiasm that he accepted the invitation to come to 'Ivanhoe' again some Wednesday afternoon, if he could find the time. Find the time! Could he find time for anything else? he asked himself, as he walked home through a transfigured Balham. He had received, he felt, a baptism of the spirit, an ideal of perfection had been revealed to his eyes, a touchstone placed in his hand which might turn to brass much that he had previously regarded as gold.

But when he reached London, and walked through Charles Street towards his lodgings, the green cabinet, which he had quite forgotten, began to gleam again in his memory. He was dining in Charles Street the next evening; the inhabitants of that region and perhaps Lady Blanche herself, might be interested in his discovery. And even perhaps the great gardener and picture-collector, Sir Tresham Tresham of Place, whom he was half-promised to have the honour of meeting at last.

This honour was his; he was introduced to that master of appreciations, to whose authority even Lady Blanche herself paid homage. There were several other guests; Gus talked of the marvellous villa-residence he had found at Balham, contrasting it, boldly, with the villa of the Beilby-Browns at Binstead. Of this abode, and of his friends, its owners, he gave an ironical account (for his eye was an acute organ of observation) that caused laughter in Charles Street. Gus in fact tasted for the first time that cup of magic, the intoxication of wagging his tongue—or at least of thinking he wagged it—in the amusing, malicious talk of the beau monde; light, perfidious talk of a kind never heard in the shire of Bedford, nor in Bedford Square either. Yes, Gus was a success that evening; his voice was listened to; so that when he spoke of the green cabinet at Tooting, and asked the advice of these connoisseurs about his project of its purchase, Lady Blanche's thoughtful eye lit up. 'We'll motor out there tomorrow and see it,' she declared decisively, 'and you, Tresham, must come with us.' So the following afternoon Lady Blanche's car carried the three of them to Balham; and at the first glance of the green cabinet, Lady Blanche, after one look at Sir Tresham, took command of the situation. The price? Let it be sent at once to Charles Street, she rapped out.

This prompt appropriation of his prize, with no subsequent explanations, almost took Gus's breath away; and when he found the cabinet established in the most prominent position in Lady Blanche's drawing-room, he was still more amazed to hear her describe it as one of the happiest of her discoveries; for if she did possess any gift, it was the gift, she said, of making lucky finds in the most unlikely places. Against such assurance Gus did not dare to protest. That Sir Tresham, who was also present, seemed by his silence to corroborate this legend, made our hero feel more beyond his depth than ever; and when the bill for the cabinet arrived at the address he had given at Tooting, and it was intimated that the account already sent to Charles Street had received no answer, Gus decided that it would be prudent to settle the matter himself, and say nothing about it.

These were deep, and, he dimly suspected, dangerous waters; and indeed his suspicion was only too soon confirmed, when a maelstrom seemed suddenly to open in Charles Street; when the rains descended and the wind blew on that house, and Gus's help was requisitioned—to a degree beyond his imagination, and indeed, beyond his means—to keep its roof in position. All the more welcome, as a refuge for his troubled spirit, did he find his visits to Balham, whither he would often walk in his oldest clothes, and spend the afternoons in digging. The Miss Runkles (Runkle, he had learned, was their name) were always making changes, and would pitilessly root up and destroy plants which they felt they could replace to advantage. Then Gus would have tea with these charming, quite merciless young women, with whom he would plead, but in vain, for some respectable, long-established, long-domesticated shrub they had decided to get rid of.

Of these afternoons he sometimes felt he boasted too much in Charles Street. Some intuition, some premonition, and indeed the chaff of his listeners about his conquests in the suburbs, warned him that these two phases of his life, its Mayfair and its Balham aspects, should be kept further apart in his conversation.

But Lady Blanche never listened: she said nothing. The pre-occupation of this lady was plainly to base her position more firmly than ever on the green cabinet, the fame of which was widely spread through Mayfair, and attracted Royal visitors to Charles Street, and even reached, across the Tottenham Court

Road, to the ears of Sophia, who, however, when she questioned Gus about it, received nothing but vague answers. Of the cabinet and of Lady Blanche he never spoke a word to the Miss Runkles, feeling that they took no more interest in Mayfair than Lady Blanche took in Balham. Nor did Sir Tresham either, he thought till one evening, when they walked away from Charles Street together, the Baronet surprised Gus by casually remarking, 'I'm rather like to have a look at that garden you're always gassing about; perhaps you can take me there one day?'

Gus asked and received permission to bring his friend to Balham, and as they journeyed thither Gus felt that Tresham's attitude was slightly ironic. How, he wondered, the place and people would mirror themselves in the worldly, fastidious eyes of his companion? But soon he became aware that his real anxiety was about a much more important aspect of the situation. The real, the profound question was, he realized, not what Tresham would think of 'Ivanhoe', but what 'Ivanhoe' would think of Sir Tresham. His misgiving lest the distinguished almost famous, collector might not perhaps pass muster at the Balham villa, brought home to him in startling fashion the respect with which he had come to regard those accomplished, unfathomable young women. But luckily all went well; the Miss Runkles were perfect, as they were always perfect in their fine accomplished ease. Tresham too was perfect; seemed indeed to bud and blossom in that atmosphere, revealing a genial simplicity and urbane sense of kindly fun of which Gus had never seen the slightest sign in Charles Street. They talked, how they all talked until at last the conversation fell on books, when Gus dropped out; the book-world being for him an unknown region, and its jargon a language of which he didn't understand a word.

Tresham, though from the beginning plainly all eyes, had hitherto looked at everything without a word of comment; but when the Miss Runkles brought out some little, brown old books with almost effaced gilding, he exclaimed, 'I say, I say!' and then, after examining for himself the rows of volumes, he threw himself into an armchair and cried, 'Those first quartos—where in God's name did you get them? I thought I was a book-collector, but we live and learn.'

At last they took their leave, begging permission to come again. Certainly they must come again—come some Wednesday



afternoon. And if the sisters themselves should go to Italy, as they thought of doing, their acquaintances from London mustn't forget to come on the anniversary of this visit, July 15th, wasn't it? at exactly four o'clock, when they might find the *Reginalda Coerulea* in flower.

'Who in Heaven's name are they?' Tresham asked of Gus as they walked back along the Balham Road. 'Who indeed?' Gus echoed. 'All I know is what they have told me, that their father had a draper's shop in Balham. I believe they lived for years in Italy.'

'Who do they know, who are their friends?' Tresham queried further. 'What wealth and what wonderful friends they must have!'

'Wonderful,' Gus agreed, but who they were and what was the social background of the Balham ladies he had no notion; beyond the local vicar he had never heard them mention the names of any other acquaintance. But Reginald Farrer must have been a friend—Gus had seen copies at 'Ivanhoe' of his two famous accounts of his Tibetan expeditions to search for plants; *On the Eaves of the World* and *The Rainbow Bridge*, affectionately inscribed to 'Fortunata and Mary Runkle'. And people were always sending books and plants to 'Ivanhoe', and they went out a lot, Gus was certain.

The two of them agreed to leave it at that. After all, who were the friends of these Balham young women, the means by which they had acquired their sure connoisseurship and priceless pictures? The Museum directors who advised them, the gardens and private collections they frequented, the undreamed of circles, that, in Italy or elsewhere, they illuminated with their presence, were their own affair; it was enough to be allowed on Wednesday afternoons to go to 'Ivanhoe'. Gus and his companion took full advantage of this privilege.

When it became known, as it soon did become known in Charles Street, that Tresham had also begun to frequent Balham, jocular allusions to the subject became more frequent (though Lady Blanche said nothing), and it was taken for granted there that both Gus and the Baronet were about to lead to the altar two long-nosed spinsters from the suburbs. Ah, if these words spoken in jest could only prove true ones! Gus sighed; for himself he did not dare entertain the notion; and although he suspected

sometimes that Tresham might be nourishing some such project; he felt that there was an austerity, a kind of Diana-like aloofness in the attitude of the Miss Runkles that must make any such hope a vain one.

Still Lady Blanche said nothing.

Discussions of the Good and the Beautiful were what genuinely interested this earnest thinker (and no one who knew her could doubt that her interest was genuine); badinage, she would frankly admit, rather bored her. Still her silence seemed curious to Gus, till one day she broke that silence by remarking, 'I should like to see that garden at Balham—could you let me motor you there one afternoon?' When the young man hesitated, Lady Blanche added 'Very well then, get them to tea in your rooms; and ask me to meet them.' Gus hoped the Miss Runkles would refuse, but his invitation was accepted without comment; and although Tresham, whom he also invited, did not appear, and Gus had not felt it necessary to accept Sophia's kind, if surprising, offer to come and pour out tea for Lady Blanche (for he knew Sophia's opinion of that lady) and suggested also that Percy might look in on the party later, if he could find the time for it; yet the occasion was, Gus thought, a great success. His rooms were pretty, and decorated with the prettiest of flowers, for his flair had not failed him. He had never seen Lady Blanche look more lovely, in her rich costume and great hat; the Miss Runkles were quietly dressed, as indeed they were always. Lady Blanche evidently laid herself out to please them, and although she invited herself to 'Ivanhoe', she did it with such half-shy supplication, that Gus could not imagine that the plain and plainly dressed young women from Balham were anything but flattered by the request of this lady whose golden kindness and gentle, affectionate sweetness had won his most sincere devotion.

When Gus next called at Charles Street, he found the visit had already taken place, and Lady Blanche was full of praise of his dear, quaint, delightful friends and their sweet little garden. She must have them at Charles Street; they would arrange a little dinner. The little dinner, however, never took place and Gus never again saw the Balham sisters. The Miss Runkles were not at home, the maid informed him, the next Wednesday, and on several subsequent Wednesdays, when he rang the door-bell of 'Ivanhoe'. That the same sentence of exclusion



A mashuf, or native boat



Arab soldiers of Shaikh Raisan el Gassad





A mahdeef, or house built of reeds—common in the rice-growing country



The interior of a mahdeef, showing the coffee man and his brass pots





Iraki irrigation canal



Hagi Farud—drinking tea with guests in the evening outside the mahdeef



A majlis, or conference held for Shaikhs by the Political Adviser of the Mur  
(Maj. C. S. J. Berkeley)



Shaikh Daih el Shirat

had been passed on Sir Tresham too, he learned one evening, when, dining in Charles Street, they met in the drawing-room before their hostess had come down.

'She's done us in!' the Baronet surprisingly exclaimed.

'You mean Lady Blanche? Why should she?'

Tresham gave an odd look at Gus. 'Oh well, it's perhaps because they made her feel dowdy. That no woman ever forgives.'

'Dowdy!' exclaimed Gus, 'but they dress with such plainness!'

'Plainness you call it! The plainness of Paris and Paquin takes some beating.'

'But why is the beating for you and me? And how could she do it?'

'Oh, she told some black, hellish lie, perhaps, she's quite capable of doing it. As you know, and you must know—with all her sweetness and graces, she's a Fiend—no, not a Fiend, but a Vampire. But probably she merely repeated the things people said—the things we let them say. The jokes—they're fastidious, they're ruthless young women.'

'The jokes were beastly,' Gus answered. 'Do you think Lady Blanche heard them? She didn't seem ever to listen.'

'Hear them! Vampires like Blanche hear every word—you can bet on that!'

Gus was silent a moment; then, his slow brain almost exploding with a burst of thought, 'I'm afraid,' he exclaimed, 'it's worse than that. The lie they wouldn't believe, and they might perhaps forgive the jokes—I don't know. But they couldn't forgive Lady Blanche. I mean they saw us through her—she shed a lurid light. As you say, they're horribly fastidious, they're ruthless. They don't care to be mixed up with this sort of thing.'

'You mean?'

'I mean the snobbery, and well, all sorts of second-rateness. The Jezebels of Mayfair and the smell of its gutters—and other things!' The two interlocutors looked hard at each other. How much, each wondered, did the other know?

'You mean her wickedness?' asked Sir Tresham.

'Wickedness?' Gus was astonished.

'Yes, wickedness! you know what the great Oscar said: Paint me with a background of ruined families.' That's the way our Blanche ought to be painted. Ruined families and

friendships and broken careers and arches! Well anyhow, she's done for us now.'

'Yes, they've turned us down,' Gus reiterated. 'We're all not good enough. They've turned us down just as they turned down that cabinet.'

'The green cabinet?' They both moved in front of it.

'Yes, I never told you, but before I—before Lady Blanche bought it, they had had it at "Ivanhoe" on approval and sent it back. It wasn't good enough—like us, it wasn't quite up to the mark. Damn it!'

'Damn what?' asked Lady Blanche in her sweet, chanting voice. She had come unobserved into the room while her guests were staring blankly at that piece of furniture.

'We were talking of "Ivanhoe",' Gus blurted out, wondering how much Lady Blanche had heard.

'Ah,' chanted Lady Blanche, 'you mustn't damn "Ivanhoe"—those sweet, dear people—we're tremendous friends!'

Gus didn't believe, he couldn't believe this. If Lady Blanche had closed the door of 'Ivanhoe' on them, she had slammed it on him; he felt sure, even more decisively on her own precious person. But she had done what she wanted. And how she had done it they would never know. But what did she care?

How much she did care, to what extent she had been damaged by her collision with 'Ivanhoe' and what it stood for, was not, however, apparent before long. The first symptom was the disappearance of the green cabinet, and its subsequent appearance for sale at a fabulous price in a Bond Street shop. This was the beginning of a general disintegration and breaking up of things. In the autumn, Lady Blanche, declaring herself dissatisfied with material objects, came to give more and more of her time to the investigation of immaterial apparitions. She soon attained as great a prestige and as exclusive a position in the spiritual world (which had now become fashionable) as the one she had previously achieved in the world of taste. Among the aristocratic soul-searchers who now filled her new house Gus was no longer welcomed, though Tresham, he understood, had been carried up into the higher sphere in the assumption from Charles Street, whence Lady Blanche moved into a big house she had built at Hampstead, 'Tabernacle' she called it; it rather over-shadowed the Garden Suburb. The Charles Street set dissolved



like one of those floating islands which come together and dissolve on tropical seas; and Gus fluttered back to his old friends, the Beilby-Browns, who received him all the more kindly, since his wings had been singed, as Sophia had often told Percy they would be singed, by his misadventures in Mayfair. However, after the forced sale of 'Dumplings', Percy had procured him a job in the Bedfordshire Solicitors' office, and he was quite a beau once more in the best Leighton Buzzard circles. But to London his portly beau (slightly damaged and indeed planet-struck by a remote silvery orb of which Sophia had no notion) would be sent now and then on the firm's errands. As one of these occasions happened to coincide with the date when the *Reginalda Coerulea* was expected to expand its blue flower, Gus went alone for a bus-ride along the Balham Road. As he stared at 'Ivanhoe', in passing, he saw the drive of that residence was full of motors, and there was also a carriage with coachmen and footmen and fine horses.

Strains of music floated on the air: there must be a garden-party, and the Dance of the Happy Spirits in the Elysian Fields was being played by wind and string instruments. By Gluck, wasn't it? Gus's memory for music wasn't a good one, and his thoughts were now distracted by a sight that somewhat perturbed him. Was that Sir Tresham who was just entering the gate of 'Ivanhoe', and the lady in the car with him—was she Lady Blanche? It was neither, he saw to his relief the next moment; for gazing back as the bus jolted on he saw the Baronet himself on the bus gazing back at 'Ivanhoe' before it vanished. He also was regretting, no doubt, the tryst he couldn't keep either. He looked depressed, and rather shabby, Gus thought, and certainly older. Had he, too, been forced to sell Place, Gus wondered, to help raise a Tabernacle at Hampstead? Gus went back on the bus-top and shook the hand and sat down by his former acquaintance. They talked of current events, and the weather, and Gus spoke of Leighton Buzzard, and the prospects of a good crop of Bedfordshire straw in the Luton district where he now lived.

But of 'Ivanhoe' and the Miss Runkles, or of Charles Street and Lady Blanche, they said not a word.

HENRY D. DAVRAY

## MALLARMÉ AS I KNEW HIM

EVERY day I have under my eye a portrait of Stéphane Mallarmé. Of all the counterfeit presentments of my contemporaries, I have kept by me, it is one of those I prize the most. It is many a long year since I had it framed, and it has borne me company in all my wanderings. Whenever I go into fresh quarters, it is always one of the first pictures I hang up on the wall. It serves me as a twofold remembrancer, calling back, as it does to my mind, a vision not only of the poet but of his delineator.

There are not many portraits of Mallarmé extant, but such as there are are highly prized. He was painted by Manet, Renoir and Gauguin, etched by James McNeill Whistler, and drawn by other artists such as Luque, Valloton and Cazals. Photographs of Mallarmé are rare indeed. The best known, if not the only one, is that which figures as the frontispiece to the collected edition of his *Poésies*. It shows him full face, thrown over his shoulders the travelling rug with the small check pattern which he kept on, even indoors, for fear of catching cold. This photograph is certainly a speaking likeness. There he is, just as I saw him many and many a time, one eye wider open than the other, a tuft of brindled hair to the left of his forehead, a long typically Gallic moustache, a short goatee beard and a wide-flowing tie encircling a tall collar.

The portrait I have of him shows just his face, looking straight at you. It is an excellent likeness, though it is little more than a sketch. It is the work of the Norwegian artist, Edvard Munch, who drew it in 1892 and exhibited it with a selection of his other work in a Bond Street Gallery, a little before the present war. At the end of the last century, Munch stopped for a time in Paris to put the finishing touches on his artistic education. He was assisted by a subsidy from the Norwegian Government, as were a good many other Scandinavian painters and writers to whom the brilliance of the City of Light was an irresistible attraction.

Munch was a very indifferent linguist, and it was a very considerable time before he could express himself in more or less intelligible French. As, however, he knew a little English,

we succeeded, by having recourse to both languages, in arriving at something that bore a tolerable resemblance to conversation. This linguistic experience served as a bond between us and we became close friends. Munch had heard a good deal about Mallarmé from his fellow countrymen, who eagerly joined in the rather fulsome admiration for the poet of 'Herodiade', which was then professed by the younger generation in France. As soon as he got to know that I had the *entrée* to the poet's Tuesday reception, he begged me to introduce him, and one day, with the consent of the Master, I took him along with me. Munch was vastly impressed by Mallarmé's profoundly expressive countenance and was forthwith seized with the idea of painting his portrait. He implored me to make known his desire. As I knew how almost morbidly sensitive the poet was and how he detested anything even remotely resembling publicity, I thought twice about it and tried to persuade Munch to give up the notion. But Munch refused to be discouraged. The upshot of it was, I got over my qualms, made my request and had it refused. However, Mallarmé had displayed so much grace and charm in signifying his refusal and I had such a poignant consciousness of the effect the refusal would have on my young Scandinavian friend, that I returned to the charge, and to such good effect that Mallarmé, yielding to my representations, agreed to fix a date for the first sitting. That sitting was fated to be the first and the last: it had no sequel. Twenty minutes went by and then Mallarmé, speaking in English, told the dumb-founded artist that he could stand it no longer and asked him to terminate the sitting.

Filled with disappointment, Munch came straight to me and recounted his misadventure. He had brought his drawing with him and I asked him to show it to me, fully expecting to see a mere preliminary note, something quite rough and ready. Judge of my surprise when I found myself contemplating what seemed to be a finished portrait and a perfect likeness. I told Munch what I thought of it. He would not believe me, imagining I was only trying to let him down gently. He protested emphatically that no other sitting or two were absolutely necessary if the work was to be anything like finished, adding that, all the same, he realized that his dismissal was final. At my request, Munch left the sketch with me, and in the course of the next few days I got a

number of French friends of mine to look at it. They all shared my opinion of the drawing and persuaded Munch not to destroy it, which would have been nothing short of a tragedy.

On the following Tuesday I turned up at Mallarmé's full of contrition at having been the means of inflicting upon him such a disagreeable experience, and had made up my mind to tell him so. He did not give me the time. He explained that, after a quarter of an hour or so, the task of remaining absolutely still became unbearable and that, try as he might, he had had to give it up. With his usual courtesy, he expressed his deep regret and begged me to tell Munch how sorry he was, adding, moreover, that the Norwegian, even in that short time, had managed to produce an excellent portrait and that any attempt to improve it would, he was sure, inevitably have the opposite result.

When I told him what had passed, Munch was both deeply touched and highly gratified. Forgetting his disappointment, he made a point of going and thanking the poet in person. This incident that ended on so happy a note won him an enviable prestige with the Scandinavian artists' colony who were in the habit of foregathering at the Closerie des Lilas, at cocktail-time and after dinner, under the chestnuts in the Place de l'Observatoire. He was the man who had done a portrait of Stéphane Mallarmé.

In those days I was living near the Luxembourg Gardens, on the edge of the Quartier Latin, and visiting Mallarmé meant going from one end of Paris to the other. Means of transport were not so many nor so rapid as they are today, and I am inclined to think that one would have done just as well to go on Shanks's pony. If you wanted to get from the Quartier Latin on Montparnasse to the Batignolles, you could take a horse-bus that would land you at the Gare St. Lazare. Mallarmé's abode was situated well beyond the outer Boulevard, beyond the tunnel that enclosed the down line. At the point where the up-line leaves the station the permanent way is open to the sky and is flanked on the eastern side by the last few houses that form the rearguard of the Quartier de l'Europe. I remember, as I strode lightly-hearted up the Rue de Rome, wondering to myself in which of those houses Zola had lodged the hero of *La Bête Humaine*. I was struck by the contrast between Zola's ruthless, powerful realism and the delicate, subtle turn of mind of the poet to whose discourse I was about to listen.



Such as enjoyed the privilege of hearing Mallarmé's talk, never forgot the experience. His guests were comparatively numerous, and among the few who survive to this day are: Paul Valéry, Edouard Dujardin, Albert Mockel, Paul Claudel, André Fontainas, Camille Mauclair, André Gide; but what a multitude have passed beyond the veil! Teodor de Wyzewa, Jean de Mitty, Pierre Louys, Gustave Kahn, André Lebey, Jean de Tinan, Jules Laforgue, Théodore Duret, Félix Fénéon, René Ghil, Henri de Régnier, Francis Vielé-Griffin, Laurent Tailhade, Bernard Lazare, Charles Morice, Pierre Quillard, Ferdinand Lérold, Stuart Merrill, Marcel Schwob and his friend Charles Whibley, who, in those days, had rooms with amazingly low ceilings, beneath the shadow of St. Sulpice. These were the most fervent worshippers at the shrine, but there were other more casual droppers-in to be seen from time to time, journalists like Jules Huret and Georges Docquois, distinguished foreigners such as George Brandès and Arthur Symons and, on some rare occasions, George Moore, under the wing of Edouard Dujardin. Whatever the diversity that characterized this motley company of artists, writers and poets, all were united by the same basic intellectual affinity. There were others who came, lured by curiosity, or the desire to be in the swim, but these soon disappeared and were seen no more, probably realizing that the spiritual atmosphere was of too Attic a rarity for them to breathe with comfort.

Mallarmé's house was in no way different from its neighbours; it was just as painfully commonplace as they. It was, in fact, one of those structures, erected during the period immediately following the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, for the accommodation of middle-class tenants of restricted means or of persons engaged in one of the so-called learned professions. The rooms were cramped and lacking in even the most elementary comforts. In putting up these houses, landlords and architects alike seem to have been actuated by one single motive, namely to pile as many as possible of those exiguous dwellings one on top of another in order to obtain the maximum of rent from the minimum of space, utterly regardless of the convenience and well-being of the tenants. My youthful imagination would have desired that a man of Mallarmé's distinction should have been housed in a spacious and luxurious abode and have lived and moved and had

his being in surroundings befitting the nobility of his mind. He possessed none of those worldly goods which some men inherit from well-to-do parents, nor did his work provide him with the means to secure those material advantages which only money can command. His resources were limited to what he earned as a teacher of English in a Paris lycée. It was doubtless in the hope of creating for himself a supplementary source of income that he compiled "Les Mots Anglais", which a sub-title defines as 'Petite Philologie à l'usage des Classes et du Monde', a sort of manual for students of English, of which, strolling one day along the quays, I was lucky enough to come across a copy on a second-hand stall, and thus possessed myself of a volume as scarce as was little sought-for. He could never have made much money from it. What he ought to have done was to have it taken up by the Board of Education and put on the list of textbooks to be used in English classes. The little manual would then have been constantly reprinted and its author would have been the recipient of substantial royalties. But in order to get his book thus officially adopted, he would have had to do the sort of scheming and wire-pulling which, to a man of Mallarmé's temperament, would have been in the last degree repugnant. His salary sufficed to procure him his daily bread, and, satisfied with that, he devoted his leisure, in the words of Henri de Régnier, 'to the sole pursuit of Beauty and Truth'. That sort of ambition, adds Henri de Régnier, is not one in which the public is particularly interested. But interested the little group of faithful followers who gathered round him every Tuesday in the little room which was both his dining-room and drawing-room and in which he was accustomed to receive us with unaffected courtesy. Nevertheless, it was well that his friends and admirers did not all put in an appearance at one and the same time, for there would not have been room for them. When the pressure became too great, the first-comers would discreetly withdraw. I was one of the youngest and times without number I had to remain standing, leaning against the wall under some precious picture, or supporting my elbows on the tall carved oak sideboard with its freight of pewter and pottery.

Once in the poet's presence, you forgot all about the lowliness of the surroundings; your whole attention was centred on the fine, engaging countenance, the light that shone in the depths of

the gentle eyes; you heard nothing but the subtly delicate modulations of his voice; you were laid under the spell of his singularly winning personality, you felt that you were in the presence of a being of rare distinction, of a true aristocrat. Mallarmé was assuredly one of the most fascinating of all talkers. His discourse, easy, lucid and familiar, was clearly born of long and patient meditation. Whether his subject was art, or life, or poetry, his dearest theme of all, everything he said was luminous, delicate and to the point. He had original ideas to offer on every subject he touched upon, and they were expressed in phrases of incomparable felicity, phrases of a lucidity astonishing for an author whose writings bore the reputation of being nebulous and esoteric in the last degree. His talk, which he illustrated with anecdotes recounted with exquisite taste and skill, glowed with intelligence, with an understanding of life and man as amazing as it was profound; and it was marked by a complete detachment from material things and the more sordid aspects of human existence.

One of these Tuesdays, I had just arrived, and was slipping in as inconspicuously as possible behind my elders, so as not to interrupt the discussion, when I heard myself being addressed point-blank by the Master. For some time past I had undertaken the task of writing the section denoted 'Lettres Anglaises' in the 'Revue du Mois' (that is to say the periodical stocktaking of outstanding events in the realms of politics, literature, science, art, music, etc.) of the *Mercure de France*. It thus fell to my province to give an account of the various English books which their authors or publishers had sent to the *Mercure* for review. I also had to chronicle events of importance in the literary world and to write the obituaries of any persons of eminence in the Republic of Letters, or rather in the British section of it, who might have departed this life during the period under review. Before long I shall be able to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of my discharge of this function, which only the occupation of Paris by the insufferable Hun has compelled me to intermit.

A little while before the occasion to which I have just alluded an Australian poet had sent the *Mercure* a slender volume of poems. When I came to examine these effusions I found that the poet had printed them without stops and without capitals! I did my level best to get at the meaning, but at last I had to give it up. Perhaps I threw up the sponge too soon; it is possible, for I freely

confess that I have never much cared to cudgel my brains over such verbal intricacies. Be that as it may, these poems, innocent alike of commas and full stops, soon bemused me like a Chinese puzzle, and this was the impression of them I had thought to convey, not without a touch of irony, in my review. Mallarmé animadverted on me with some severity for what I had done whereat I was not a little abashed. It happened that the Australian poet had also sent a copy of his book to Mallarmé, accompanying it with a long letter in which he declared himself his disciple and expatiated with fulsome eloquence on the admiration with which Mallarmé inspired him.

Before replying to the Australian, Mallarmé had taken immense trouble trying to solve the enigmas, and protested that he had succeeded, the truth of which statement he proceeded to demonstrate by reading one or two brief specimens. I freely admitted that the poems had a meaning, but protested that I could not for the life of me, see why the poet had deliberately neglected to drive that meaning home by disdaining the customary signs and symbols expressly invented for the purpose, the use of which might have saved his readers an unnecessary headache. Mallarmé then embarked on one of his subtle disquisitions with the purpose of demonstrating that a poet might advantageously discard those lets and hindrances which, according to him, the signs of punctuation really are, and pointed out that, so far as he was concerned, he made the most sparing possible use of them. I had on the tip of my tongue to rejoin that that did not always tend to facilitate the elucidation of his poems, but deemed it politic thereby to observe that, in conversation, the intonation of the voice, the play of the features, the gesticulations of the speaker took the place of punctuation, and that he himself employed these means to perfection. At this juncture, Paul Valéry broke in with a remark which diverted the conversation into another channel, the art of public speaking, and I was not a little relieved to be released from the pillory. Nevertheless, I had been taught a lesson and, afterwards, when I came to compose my copy, wrote with circumspection, never failing to bear in mind that I had Mallarmé among my readers and my critics.

In 1892, having been a teacher of English in various provincial colleges and Paris Lycées for some thirty years, Mallarmé retired on a pension and henceforth spent the greater part of the



year in his little house at Valvins. No sooner did the days begin to lengthen than away he hastened thither, nor did Paris see him again till the first chill days of autumn. In those days I spent many summers at Marlotte on the outskirts of the Forest of Fontainebleau, the summer resort of a whole colony of literary folk and artists of every nationality, Americans, Englishmen, Scandinavians, Belgians, Frenchmen. I was an ardent cyclist, and that was in no way singular, for, in those days, when a motor-car was still a primitive thing, a rare phenomenon, every one had his 'bike'. And so, perched up on my two wheels, I ranged at will the splendid forest with its lovely vistas and picturesque demesnes; I went and visited the various friends I had in the peaceful villages that slumbered undisturbed along its edge.

At Bois-le-Roi, there was Pierre Quillard, poet and socialist, champion of the persecuted Armenians, as intrepid in his onslaught on the bloodthirsty Sultan Abdul-Hamid as, later on, with Bernard Lazare and Francis de Pressensé at his side, he showed himself fearless and indomitable in his defence of Captain Dreyfus. At Samois, there was Elémir Bourges, who, 'far from the noise and smoke of town', pursued in peace his solitary meditations. At Grez and at Montigny, on the banks of the Aisne, with the Scandinavians Wilhelm Krog, the brothers Krag and the Danish poet Obstfelder, all of them addicted to 'cycling', which they quaffed in brimming bumpers, Runciman, the musical critic of the *Saturday Review* and Charles Conder, who had been a pupil of Cormon before drawing designs for fans which he painted in water-colours on panels of white silk, both used to spend holidays of voluptuous ease, sipping their absinthe at any hour of the day whenever the fancy took them. At Vulaines, Paul and Victor Margueritte continued their fruitful collaboration. At Barbizon, one after another, came the line of painters loyal to the shades of Millet and of Corot. At Avon, Edouard Dujardin had his stately country house standing in the midst of a park adorned with splendid trees, whence on certain days he would go down to Valvins and there converse with Mallarmé. Thus I had no lack of objectives for my excursions. One day, being bidden to luncheon at Dujardin's, I found there—he had come for the week-end—no less a person than George Moore, with whom my host was on particularly friendly terms, and whom I had already come across in London, where he was, in those

days, dramatic critic on one of the principal dailies. After lunch a victoria came to fetch us and conveyed us to Valvins, where we spent the rest of the afternoon in Mallarmé's little garden listening to the poet as, for George Moore's benefit, he commented up and explained his 'Phénomène futur', of which Moore published an English version in the *Savoy* for July 1890.

It also happened that I sometimes went alone to Valvins. From the towpath where the Seine takes a gentle curve in the reach between Valvins and Samois, I was to catch a glimpse of his skiff with its white sail in which the poet used to make short tacks across the narrow reach. He would hail me cordially as I hovered in sight, and sitting myself on the river's bank, alongside my bike, we would chat awhile together. If, as often happened, I had just got back from England, I would give him the latest news of what was afoot in the world of letters over there, telling him about the younger men, writers and poets, who were beginning to attract attention at the time. He took a particular interest in Arthur Symons, who published a verse translation of 'Hérodias' in the last number of the short-lived *Savoy*, of which he was the editor. He had a specially warm place in his heart for Ernest Dowson, John Gray and Hubert Crackanthorpe, who had been to visit him in Paris. The youthful pioneers of the Celtic Renaissance, and above all W. B. Yeats, struck him as full of promise; while, among the older men, it was George Meredith of whom he thought the most.

He kept himself very much up to date about intellectual activities in England, and, beyond a doubt, his knowledge of this country and its literature must have had its influence on his own line of thought. But, so far as I am aware, no one has hitherto attempted to go into this question, and it is certainly not a task which I myself shall undertake. It has been stated that when, at the age of twenty, he came to London, his purpose was to improve his English in order that he might be the better able to savour the writings of Edgar Allan Poe. And, in point of fact, the first work he published—it appeared in 1874—was a translation of 'The Raven', accompanied by the original text and embellished with five drawings by Manet. In 1888 he brought out, under the imprint of Deman of Brussels, 'Les Poèmes d'Edgar Poe', with a tailpiece and a portrait by Manet. It appeared as a quarto and only one hundred copies of it were printed. An edition published the

same year by Vanier of Paris was disavowed by Mallarmé on the ground that it was not in accordance with the text. In 1876 he published in Paris, from the French original, *L'Histoire du Caliphe Vathek*, by William Beckford, which was reprinted in 1880, and again in 1893. In the year 1888, the book-publishing department of his friend Dujardin's *Revue Indépendante* published his version of *Mr. Whistler's Ten o'clock*.

These names and titles are not without their significance. It seems beyond question that what Mallarmé sought at all costs was something out of the ordinary, remote from the commonplace, the work of original minds of a similar mould to his own. Such examples of his work as we possess are certainly esoteric and we may well question whether all those who professed the Mallarmeian cult were quite the adepts they pretended to be, even in regard to such portions of his work in prose or verse as were generally reputed the least recondite. For example, on the 1st of March 1894, at the invitation of Frederick York Powell, his *ami de trois jours et toujours*, he delivered a lecture before the Taylorian Association at Oxford. He had chosen as his subject 'Music and Letters', and so elaborate were the arabesques of style and expression with which he festooned his discourse that I do not think it would be rash to affirm that, of all his audience, however complete and accurate their knowledge of French, only a handful had the vaguest idea of what the lecturer was driving at. York Powell may have been one of the exceptions, one of the rare *illuminati*—York Powell, that intellectual acrobat, that curious explorer of the *arcana* of abstruse languages who, while occupying the chair of Modern History at Oxford, found time to give lessons in Law, Early English, French and German, compiled an 'Icelandic Prose Reader', a 'Corpus Poeticum boreale', translated the 'Færeyinga Saga', the authentic quotations of Omar Khayyam, and presided over the deliberations of the Irish Text Society. The following day, thanks to Charles Whibley's brother, Mallarmé gave the same lecture, the same but with a difference, as he put it, at Pembroke College, Cambridge, where listeners who understood him could hardly have been more numerous. Be that as it may, this visit of his to the two ancient universities caused him a lively satisfaction. He told us all about it a few days after his return. The grave, urbane decorum of all, the deference paid to him in these antique homes of study

and learning and meditation, were well calculated to give him pleasure. York Powell's original and arresting figure had greatly struck him, and he was vastly entertained by various little personal details I was able to give him about that versatile professor.

Some little time afterwards the lecture was published in book form. It consisted of scarcely more than three thousand words occupying thirty-eight out of the eighty pages of thick paper which made up this slender volume, the rest being taken up with an introductory dissertation and notes, which were supposed to assist the reader to understand the text. It is stiff reading, all of it. Mallarmé expresses ideas which he had, no doubt, long been excogitating; since the time, in fact, when, of a Sunday, he might have been seen at the Colonne Concerts, seated on a form in the promenade and anon pulling out a sheaf of papers from his pocket, and scribbling down, from time to time, notes doubtless suggested by the music to which he had been listening.

Together with a host of others, these notes were intended to be used in connection with the definitive work he had in contemplation but which he never managed to complete. What did they contain? We may take it that but few passages had received the final touch. Anyhow, no use has been made of them up to the present. After his demise, they remained in the hands of his widow, and when she died they passed to Mademoiselle Mallarmé. She left them unconditionally to her husband, Dr. Bonniot, whom she married pretty late in life, for, contrary to a report as false as it is persistent, she was never the wife of Paul Valéry. Dr. Bonniot, who was a medical practitioner, was also deeply versed in literature and professed an unbounded admiration for Mallarmé. He came near to thinking that he was the only living being possessed of a thorough comprehension of his work. Some people considered this pretension as a little overweening and were rather perturbed at the thought of the use so fanatical a disciple might make of the papers over which he had the fullest control. But, so far, he has suffered them to remain a dead-letter; and furthermore he stoutly declines to show them to anyone, which, perhaps, is the best that could happen.

Mallarmé died after only three days' illness, on the 8th September 1898. The news of his sudden departure filled us with consternation. I was confined to my bed at Marlotte when the news



reached me, and so I was not among the little group who followed Stéphane Mallarmé to his final resting place. He is buried on the hillside which looks across to the waving forest, in sight of the tranquil river where the white sail of his skiff had so often been the virgin sheet on which, in dreams, he had traced so many of his wondrous 'divagations'.

Some days later, being on my feet again, I made a pilgrimage to Valvins, and, as we were mounting up the hill, Victor Margueritte, in a voice faltering with emotion, told me about the little silent group of mourners who, a few days earlier, had made their way along the dusty road, beneath the autumn sun, sorrowfully following the lowly village hearse as it bore to the grave all that was mortal of one whose like we shall not look upon again, whose spirit will not die.

ANNA KAVAN

## I AM LAZARUS

THE English doctor had not particularly wanted to visit the clinic. He distrusted foreigners and their ways, especially their medical ways. He distrusted anything he did not understand. In particular, he distrusted this insulin shock treatment there had been such a fuss about. Why should putting imbeciles into a coma make them sane? It didn't make any sense. He did not think and he never had thought that there was a cure for an advanced dementia praecox case like young Thomas Bow.

The English doctor was not a very good doctor. He was middle-aged and frustrated and undistinguished and he would never have been consulted by the rich Mrs. Bow if she had not happened to buy a country house near the village in which he practised.

When Mrs. Bow had heard that the doctor was taking his wife for a motor tour on the continent for their summer holiday, he had suggested that he might call in to see her son if he should be anywhere near the clinic. The doctor realized that a suggestion from Mrs. Bow was practically a command. No one understood better than he did the importance of keeping on the right side of

a wealthy patient. Besides, it would sound well when he visited his colleagues at home after the trip. He imagined himself drinking a glass of sherry with old Leigh and casually talking about it. 'Oh yes, I had a look round the Dessones clinic when I was over there. One must keep in touch with modern developments you know.'

The English doctor thought about these things as he walked with the superintendent in the grounds of the clinic. He also thought of the time nearly a year ago when Mrs. Bow had told him that she had decided to send her son to this continental place someone had told her about. The doctor had opposed the idea. It was a useless expense. It couldn't possibly do any good. But she was determined. Well, she had plenty of money, so what did it matter? A pretty penny it must be costing her too, he thought. The thought gratified him. He glanced at the beautifully kept gardens. The grounds were really magnificent, the watered lawns green in spite of the dry summer, every tree pruned to perfection, the borders brilliant with flowers.

Out of the blue foreign sky the sun lavishly and impartially poured itself upon the two doctors, the handsome grey-haired superintendent with his white coat, the Englishman in his hot-looking tweeds.

'Wonderful place you've got here,' the visitor said in the ungracious English way that made the remark sound patronizing.

The superintendent spoke English and four other languages with complete fluency. He gracefully signified his appreciation of the other's approval. He had exactly estimated the unimportance of his companion, but it was his policy to treat everyone with polite attention. This was one of the secrets of his success.

'We're very proud of Mr. Bow,' he said. 'He's an outstanding example of the success of the treatment. He responded wonderfully well from the start and I consider him a quite remarkable cure. In a few months he should be well enough to go home. We're just keeping him under observation now.'

The English doctor began for the first time to think about Thomas Bow, whom he was to see in a few moments and whom he had last seen hopelessly insane. He wondered how he would see him today. They walked on. Behind stood the big main building, white like a smart hotel with striped awnings and window boxes bright with scarlet geraniums. In front were the

workrooms, the studios, where the patients were employed at various handicrafts.

The superintendent opened the door of a light room with a long table at which men and women were working. The sun came through the windows and shone on their hands moving over the table. Some of them were talking. There was a little froth of talk in the room which bubbled away into nothingness as the door opened. A man in an overall was in charge. He had a good-humoured face with freckles across his cheeks. He stood behind one of the patients showing him what to do. The different pairs of hands, large and small, rose and fell over the table.

'Quite a hive of industry, you see.' The superintendent was bland.

The Englishman looked uneasily at the faces and at the hands which seemed to be rising and falling of their own volition in the banded sunshine above the table.

The superintendent stepped up to the table.

'Good morning, Mr. Bow. I've brought you a visitor.'

A young man of about twenty-two, very neatly dressed in a grey suit, was sitting there with a strip of leather held in his hands. He had a pale, full, rather nice-looking face and dark hair brushed very smooth. His nose was aristocratic. He was well-built, on the big side; a little fleshy, perhaps. He looked squarely at the two doctors out of flat, hazel eyes.

'You remember me, don't you?' the English visitor said, giving his name.

He held out his hand, and after a slight pause the other man put down the piece of leather and shook the hand. He did not smile.

'Glad to see you looking so fit,' said the doctor, bringing into action his falsely hearty professional tone. He unobtrusively scrutinized the young man, who sat stiffly correct in his place at the sunny table, holding the strip of leather again.

'What are you making?' the superintendent asked him.

'A belt,' said the patient, and smiled.

He liked making the belt, and so it pleased him to have someone notice it and he smiled.

'It's pigskin,' he explained. He liked speaking about the belt.

'Very nice,' the English doctor said, not quite at ease.

'Yes,' Thomas Bow said. 'I made another before, but it was too narrow. This is a much better one.'

He looked satisfied, sure of being on safe ground. The superintendent patted his shoulder, a few more remarks were exchanged, and the doctors went out again.

'I should never have believed it possible,' the Englishman said with emphasis and repressed indignation. 'Never.'

He felt disapproving and indignant and uncomfortable without quite knowing why. Of course, the boy looks normal enough, he said to himself. He seems quiet and self-controlled. But there must be a catch in it somewhere. You can't go against nature like that. It just isn't possible. He thought uneasily of the young inexpressive face and the curious flat look of the eyes.

In the workroom the unsustained talk started again, like the twitter of nervous birds in an aviary. Mr. Bow took no notice. He spoke to no one and nobody spoke to him. He methodically went on sewing the pigskin belt with steady, regular movements of his soft hands. It was satisfactory. What had he to do with talking? All around the table were different coloured shapes whose mouths opened and closed and emitted sounds that meant nothing to him. He did not mind either the shapes or the sounds. They were part of the familiar atmosphere of the workroom, where he felt comfortable and at ease.

A buzzer set in the wall made a noise like an angry wasp. The patients rose from the table and went away, some singly, some in small groups. Now it was quiet in the workroom. The man in the overall started tidying up. He moved round the table arranging things neatly and putting other things away on the shelves.

Mr. Bow sat on in his place sewing the pigskin belt. He did not want to go out of the workroom where he felt confident and secure. Outside things were different.

The freckled man left him in peace until the whole room was tidy. Then he came up and touched his arm. 'Time to go to *déjeuner*, Monsieur Bow.' He put out his strong brown hand for the belt and the white hands of Mr. Bow reluctantly yielded it up.

'See, I take great care of it for you,' the man said kindly. He rolled the belt and wrapped it in a clean cloth and put it away in a special place at the back of one of the shelves.

Thomas Bow watched carefully. When he was sure that the belt was finally and safely disposed of he went out of the workroom. The other man followed him out and shut the door and



locked it and dropped the key into his pocket and walked quickly away to his lunch.

Mr. Bow sauntered slowly in a different direction, towards the main building. Once or twice he glanced back at the work-room. Each time he saw the door still blankly closed against him and he sighed. He walked rather stiffly on a path that crossed a park-like expanse of ground. The grass here had not been cut, but grew up tall between clumps of fine trees. Moon daisies grew in the grass. They had yellow eyes that squinted craftily through the grass.

The grass grew up tall and feathery. The grasses whispered together and turned their heads in the breeze. Mr. Bow touched the heads of the grasses with his soft fingers. The grasses responded delicately, like thin sensitive cats they arched themselves to receive the caress of his fingertips. The young man stood still and picked one of the grasses and brushed it against his cheek. It touched his skin lightly, pricklingly, like the electrified fur of a cat in a thunderstorm. He picked several more grasses.

Suddenly he was aware of a presence. The gym mistress cycling along the path had approached noiselessly. She skipped neatly off her bicycle. Like everyone else employed in the clinic, she was big and healthy and strong. The sun-bleached hairs on her muscular brown arms glittered like gold. At the gymnastic class she often spoke sharply to Mr. Bow because he was clumsy and slow. Now, however, she spoke in a friendly way.

‘Why, Mr. Bow, what are you doing with those?’

The young man laboriously assembled words in his head. He wished to explain that the grasses turned into soft-furred cats and arched their backs under his hand.

The gym mistress did not listen to what he was trying to say. It was not the fashion at the clinic to listen to what patients said. There was not enough time. Instead, she put out her hand. Steadying the bicycle with her left hand, she stretched out her right and took the grasses away from Thomas Bow and threw them down on the path. A few seeds had stuck to his jacket and he brushed them off briskly.

‘You don’t want those,’ she said. ‘Nobody picks grass. We could pick some flowers though, if you like.’ She reached down for a handful of moon daisies and offered them to him. ‘There, aren’t they pretty?’ She was very good-natured about it.

Mr. Bow unwillingly accepted the flowers.

'Come on,' she said. 'You'll be late for lunch if you don't hurry.'

She walked strongly beside him wheeling the bicycle. Some part of the mechanism accompanied them with a soft whirring noise.

The young man glanced with dislike at the daisies he carried. Their yellow eyes had a base and knowing expression. When the gym mistress was not looking he dropped them and trod on them with his brown shoe.

Inside the clinic he went into the washroom. Several coats hung on the wall. Thomas Bow avoided the washbasins nearest the coats. The hanging shapes filled him with deep suspicion. He watched them out of the ends of his eyes to make sure they did not get up to anything while he was washing his hands. Just as he was ready to go someone else came into the cloakroom, an Italian two or three years younger than he. He frowned and hurried towards the door. He did not like Sanguinelli, who had eyes like black minnows that darted about his face. Sanguinelli's face was never at rest; the muscles jumped and twitched like mice caught in traps under the skin.

'Goo-ood morn-eeng,' he said. He grinned. He only knew a few English words.

The other man did not answer but hastily opened the door. The Italian arrested him with a shrill whistle and pointed mockingly towards the Englishman's lower middle. Mr. Bow looked down guiltily. Sometimes he forgot to do up his fly buttons, and when this happened one of the doctors would reprimand him. The buttons were fastened now. Sanguinelli let out a hoot of derision.

In the passage a nurse was going towards the door that led to the staff rooms. The door-female situation was one with which Thomas Bow was quite familiar. The doctors had impressed upon him what he must do whenever it presented itself. He stepped forward politely and opened the door. He smiled. It pleased him that he knew so well what to do. The nurse smiled back. She thanked him and said how well he was looking. Then she went through the door and shut it behind her.

'Flirting with Mr. Bow?' said her friend who was passing by.

'I'm sorry for him,' said the nurse. 'He does try so hard to do what he's told. He's a nice looking boy too. It's a shame.'

'He gives me the creeps,' said the other girl. 'Like an automaton walking about. Like a robot. When you think what he

was like when he first came it's uncanny. And he always looks so worried. I believe he'd have been happier left as he was. What d'you suppose goes on inside his head?

'Heaven knows,' said her friend.

Mr. Bow was sorry that there were no more doors which he could open for ladies to pass through. He went into the hall where most of the patients were already assembled. He sat down on a hard chair in the background. He was relieved because nobody spoke to him. There was the same sort of noise here as there had been in the workroom, the sort of sporadic twittering that might come from a collection of timid cage birds. The young man looked round cautiously. The pretty dresses of the women gave him pleasure but he was not at ease. At any moment something might pounce on him, something for which he did not have the formula. He waited tensely, on enemy ground.

The gong sounded, the doctor on duty appeared, and the patients flocked after him into the dining hall. The table places were altered at every meal and each patient's place was marked with a card on which was written his name. The waiters, like well-trained sheep dogs, skilfully manœuvred the patients towards their chairs. Mr. Bow was glad to find that he was not to sit beside one of the so-called hostesses who were spaced round the big table to watch what went on. The patients stood at their places, waiting for the doctor to sit down. The doctor glanced round to make sure that everybody had found the right seat. Then he sat down. It was the signal. The room was full of loud crappings as the patients pulled back their chairs.

Mr. Bow prepared to sit down with the rest, but there was an obstruction, something impeded him, Sanguinelli had slipped quick as an eel between him and his chair. The Italian's eyes, full of malice, writhed like insane tadpoles from side to side. 'Excuse—my place.' He pointed towards the name card with his thin yellow finger.

'No,' said Thomas Bow, frowning. He was angry. He was tormented and persecuted and he would not endure it. He snatched at the back of the chair, but Sanguinelli was seated in it already. Everyone was sitting down now except the waiters and Mr. Bow.

A hostess two places away took charge of the situation. Her hair went in hard, regular waves.

'This is your seat, Mr. Bow,' she said amicably. There was chair empty beside her.

'No,' said the Englishman slowly. 'No.' He frowned deeply. 'My card is here.'

The Italian burst out laughing. He triumphantly displayed the card in front of him on which was written the name Sanguinelli. The hostess looked and saw that the card next to her was indeed the name-card of Thomas Bow.

'Come along, Mr. Bow. You've made a mistake,' she said in a firmer tone.

The young man recognized the firmness that was in her voice. He moved obediently and sat down in the empty chair and spread his table napkin widely over his knees as he had been shown how to do. He ate what was put before him, looking carefully at his neighbours to make sure that he used the same knives and forks as they did. All the time he was eating he felt angry and sad and confused. Something had happened which he did not understand. The card with his name had been there; he had seen it distinctly, but when he looked at it again Sanguinelli's name had appeared. Sanguinelli had triumphed over him in front of the whole room and it was unfair. He had heard the laughter go round the table. His heart was full of sorrow and shame. From time to time the Italian boy leaned forward and grinned at him from the stolen place, triumphant because no one had seen him exchange the cards.

After lunch the patients went out into the grounds. Games were organized. Mr. Bow was directed to take part in the simplest game, which consisted in throwing large wooden balls at a smaller ball some distance off. Mr. Bow did not understand the game. He did not understand why some of the balls were brown and some black or why one player threw before another. He stood with the large shiny ball in his hand, waiting till he should be told to throw. He was not thinking about the game. He was thinking about the pigskin belt he was making. It seemed to him that the belt was his friend. Only the feel of the cool leather could assuage the hurt and the anger inside his heart.

The time came for him to make his throw. He held the ball cupped in his hand as he saw the other players do. He aimed conscientiously at the little ball lying out on the grass, but his



ball disobeyed him and flew far beyond. There was laughter. 'Champion! Champion!' jeered the Italian voice.

Thomas Bow wandered away from the game. No one noticed him going. He wandered towards the workroom. He held out his hands to the grasses, but now they did not caress his skin like soft fur but pricked sharp as needles. As he walked he hoped very much that the workroom door would be open. It was shut, and blinds were drawn over the windows.

The young man sat down on the step in front of the workroom door. He looked bewildered and worried and very sad. He did not know what to do. It troubled him that the belt was locked away in there. He felt the belt lonely for him as he was for it. He glanced up. A cloud had passed over the sun. He would have liked to share his worry with the cloud but the cloud would not stay. He sat disconsolate on the step staring flatly ahead.

Presently he heard voices and two men came round the corner of the building. One of them was a man who visited the clinic periodically to do X-ray work. The other was a doctor with black hair and a bluish chin. Mr. Bow was afraid of the doctor, who for many months had put him into a hideous sleep with his poisoned needle.

'Hullo, what are you doing here?' the radiologist asked.

'I came for my belt,' he answered. He stood up.

He was afraid of the doctor and wanted to get away in case he should be trapped and put back again into the nightmare sleep.

'Your belt?' the other man did not understand.

'He's doing leather work at occupational therapy. I suppose he's making a belt,' the doctor explained. He came up to the patient. 'Don't you know that the workroom's closed in the afternoon?' he said to him. 'It's recreation time now. Get off and join the others.' He gave him a friendly push. Mr. Bow started back in alarm.

'I only wanted my belt,' he said, starting to move away.

The other two watched him go.

'He doesn't know how lucky he is,' said the dark doctor. 'We've pulled him back literally from a living death. That's the sort of thing that encourages one in this work.'

Mr. Bow walked carefully in the sunshine. He did not know how lucky he was and perhaps that was rather lucky as well.

# WALLIS AND WAUGH

DEAR SIR,

May I record a vote that Mr. Evelyn Waugh be awarded the first 'Alfred Wallis Prize' for his little castrated letter, which so admirably fulfils his last condition, that 'the work need not be complete in itself or in anything else'.

As Alfred Wallis is dead and is unlikely, therefore, to notice Mr. Waugh's generous offer, I suggest that the prize might more suitably bear the name of the donor.

Yours etc.,

GRAHAM GREENE

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